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The Shape of Things

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THE AMERICAN LABOR PARTY ENLIVENED the Independence Day week-end by setting out a tentative independent ticket for the New York State elections that included, along with Senator Wagner, Joseph D. McGoldrick for governor, Sidney Hillman for the short-term senatorship to fill out the term of Royal S. Copeland—a post for which Governor Lehman has already announced his candidacy—and Elinore Herrick for lieutenant governor. Designed to remind both the Democratic and Republican parties that the A. L. P. holds the balance of power, its immediate effect was to touch off a display of intra-labor fireworks. From the American Federation of Labor came praise for Governor Lehman, denunciation of both A. L. P. and C. I. O., and a bitter attack on Mrs. Herrick; from David Dubinsky came a demand that Governor Lehman's name be substituted for that of Hillman. The issue of Lehman vs. Hillman was bound to sharpen the divisions in the labor camp. The name of Hillman is anathema to the A. F. of L., and Lehman's conservatism makes his inclusion on a labor ticket anomalous despite a good record in supporting labor legislation. The Labor Party's main strength is a bargaining strength, and its announcement of an independent slate appears to be a bargaining move. At this point, taking Lehman's election for granted, the A. L. P.'s main objective would seem to be the nomination by the Democrats of a strongly pro-labor candidate for governor.

*

WE NEED NOT TAKE LITERALLY THE WORD of a self-styled "Leninist" refugee on Japanese soil for the extent and purpose of Russian war preparations in Siberia. But General Lushkoff's report of the vast military and naval establishment of the Soviet Union in the Far East bears out the very few facts that have come from more objective sources, although his conclusion that the U. S. S. R. is planning an aggressive war upon Japan is wholly unconvincing. Russia's present policy points in another direction altogether. The proverb repeated by President Kalinin in his recent campaign speech summed up his country's position as well as a long dissertation could do: "When you live with wolves,

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learn to howl like a wolf." He announced a naval-building program that aims at a fleet equal to Britain's, admitting at the same time that this had never been achieved by any other power. The meaning of his challenge and of other similar Russian pronouncements can only be read in the context of the world situation. If Chamberlain succeeds in creating a Western European pact with the fascist powers and in freezing out the Soviet Union, Russia's security will depend solely upon strength of arms. The nation that was until recently the strongest force for collective security is being driven rapidly into a position of militarized isolation—with consequences for the world beyond present calculation.

*

ISMS SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO DON uniforms and shoulder muskets. *The Nation* has for some time been urging legislation to cope with the growth of semi-military organizations in America, principally of the Nazi and fascist brand. New York State now has a chance to show the way. Proposals are before the Constitutional Convention prohibiting all military and semi-military organizations except those under the control of the state, limiting membership in the National Guard to American citizens, and denying the use of armories to any group connected with a foreign government. These proposals are aimed at the German-American Bund, whose members drill, wear uniforms, get target practice, and carry black-jacks—as was demonstrated in the Yorkville melee in which they badly mauled some American veterans. All shades of liberal and left opinion will unite in demanding not only the enactment of provisions in the new New York Constitution against military groups and camps, but of federal legislation dealing with the subject in its broadest phases. The Dies committee, which was selected by Congress to investigate un-American activities, is the wrong committee to prepare the ground for adequate legislation. Our prediction is that it will soft-pedal the Nazi groups and devote itself to more red-baiting.

*

THE AIR IS NOW FILLED WITH TALK OF politics in relief, but much of the politics is being injected by those who are most violently protesting. Many of them are professional foes of federal aid; as a smoke-screen for their position, they use any incident that can be twisted into New Deal "intimidation" of relief clients. Witness the fate of Aubrey Williams, Deputy Administrator of the WPA. Mr. Williams, in an address to WPA workers, flatly stated that the best safeguard for the unemployed is the election of men who believe in work relief; this text in elementary logic was promptly seized upon as a threat to our national integrity. These cries of injured political innocence must eventually bring diminishing returns. It is nonsense to argue that government officials must not utter such plain truths. The real question is whether such pronouncements are accompanied by "wholesale terrorism." We are inadvertently indebted to the Scripps-Howard press for a clue to the answer. Thomas L. Stokes was sent to Kentucky to do a one-man probe of politics in relief. His observations jibed with Roy Howard's opinions; charging widespread corruption, he made twenty-two specific allegations, and his series seemed Pulitzer Prize material. But Harry Hopkins fought back. After a detailed inquiry, he published an impressive rebuttal fortified by sworn testimony which contradicts twenty of the twenty-two cases cited in the Stokes articles. In his rejoinder Mr. Stokes protested that the Hopkins inquiry was not "objective" and insisted that many of the cases were "matters of opinion" but he did not substantiate a single charge; editorially the Scripps-Howard papers have ignored the twenty refutations and complained because drastic punishment was not administered in the other two cases. Mr. Howard has, of course, a comforting faith in his own and Mr. Stokes's detachment. We prefer affidavits.

*

IN GREAT BRITAIN THE FOLKLORE OF THE constitution is still the most powerful force in the state. Edward VIII came to grief on it, and there is a real chance that the Chamberlain Cabinet may meet a similar fate. England is now in the throes of what may be called "l'affaire Sandys" in which a young Conservative M. P., preparing to make a disquieting Parliamentary query about the inadequacy of Britain's anti-aircraft defense, which the government had striven to hide, was met by a demand that he reveal the sources of his information—a demand backed by the implied threat that the Official Secrets Act would be applied to him. Sandys immediately stood on his Parliamentary privilege, and the Commons upheld him. The clamor grew when the government shifted its attack and asked him to appear before a military court in his capacity as territorial officer. Chamberlain finally retreated, and the inquiry was intrusted to a Commons committee. Thus a government which has with impunity stood traditional British foreign policy on its head, betrayed every democratic principle, and flouted even the sensibilities and interests of the imperialists, may prove to have been seriously weakened by an incident which invokes the cherished constitutional liberties of members of Parliament against a tyrannical executive.

*

ANOTHER BOSS-RIDDEN AMERICAN CITY HAS been transformed overnight into a totalitarian prison. New Orleans offers fresh evidence that Frank Hague is not alone. Police are raiding C. I. O. headquarters, arresting office workers on false charges, even confiscating NLRB records; police chief John Grosch is boldly pro-

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claiming that "there's no room in New Orleans for C. I. O. Communists and reds and if I can run them out I'll do it"; liberals in the city turn frightened eyes to Washington. All these are the usual overtones of local fascism, but a situation ominous enough in itself is rendered incalculably worse by labor's private prize fight. A transport strike launched by the C. I. O. precipitated the storm; A. F. of L. teamsters promptly signed closed-shop contracts with employers who were fighting the C. I. O. Now, while wholesale police terror closes in on the city, A. F. of L. and C. I. O. workers are waging war upon each other. Certainly this crisis demands a truce in labor's ranks; it also demonstrates anew that the local bosses of yesterday are preparing to speak the language of fascism tomorrow. The question is no longer whether federal intervention is proper and desirable in these local orgies of repression. The question is whether Washington will restore law in such communities before the Hagues and Maestris begin to lay down the law in Washington.

*

ARTHUR KROCK IS A COLUMNIST DE LUXE. He writes exclusively for the New York *Times,* he will probably be the next editor of that stately sheet, and in general he symbolizes the Power of the Press. On June 22 he produced as perfect an example of the columnist's art as we have yet encountered. Senator Wagner, said Mr. Krock, was about to become a candidate for reelection; and this fact presented Mr. Wagner with both a duty and an opportunity. Senator Wagner's d. and o., he continued, with a long encomium of the Senator's record and a few well-chosen references to the British Trades Union Disputes Act, was to initiate amendments to the Wagner Act and make these his platform for reelection. It was a magnificent performance, so eloquent that toward the end Mr. Krock had convinced himself that Senator Wagner was only awaiting the chance to do his duty as Mr. Krock saw it. "Mr. Wagner," said Mr. Krock, "cannot believe his act is perfect because it has been legally sustained." (This is the new conservative line on the Wagner Act, as a result of its perfect Supreme Court score.) Two days later he delivered himself of some further definitive paragraphs on the British way with unions which must have made the average reader wonder why the President bothered to send a commission to London. It was on June 27, a blue Monday, that several of Mr. Krock's heaviest bombs exploded right in his face. Nathan Witt, secretary to the National Labor Relations Board, in a letter to the *Times,* listed eight major errors in Mr. Krock's report on the British act. It is our duty to report that Mr. Krock prefaced a feeble answer to Mr. Witt with an appeal to the last resort of columnists. His digest of the British union labor-employer situation was, he said, necessarily brief and general [and wrong?] because of the exactions of space.

Europe Turns to China

FLAT orders from Hitler withdrawing the German military advisers from China has made the Far Eastern war definitely part of the world ideological conflict. Hitherto both Hitler and Mussolini have been lukewarm toward the Japanese adventure in China. Officially, they have repeatedly declared their solidarity with Japan in its crusade against "communism" in the Far East. Unofficially, both have permitted the shipment of munitions to China, and were believed privately to favor Chinese victory for commercial reasons. The German military advisers, non-Nazis for the most part, have played an important role in developing the Chinese army and in directing strategy in the Lunghai defense. A few individuals have been suspected of disloyalty, but the majority of them, including General von Falkenhausen —head of the mission—have rendered faithful technical service. Their withdrawal and the recall of Ambassador Trautmann clearly indicate a change in policy on the part of the Nazi government. As long as the only question seemed to be whether Japan would win a partial or a complete victory, Hitler was not averse to helping China. But faced with the danger of Japanese defeat, involving a serious loss of prestige for the fascist cause, he appears to have shifted ground completely.

A further international slant on the Sino-Japanese conflict has been the blunt warning to Japan by both Britain and France with respect to the island of Hainan. Japanese control of the island would constitute a serious threat to the French in Indo-China and would endanger the flow of supplies now reaching China by way of Hongkong. Recently the Japanese made several attempts to land on Hainan but were beaten off by Chinese troops; it was a few days later that the two Western powers made it clear that they had agreed to act together in face of "complications." Now the French have suddenly occupied the Paracel Islands, a strategic group of coral reefs about 150 miles southeast of Hainan.

It will be noted that both international developments are direct results of the broadened campaign launched at the beginning of June by the new super-militarist Japanese Cabinet. Thus far this campaign has failed to make a dent in Chinese resistance. It has led Japan to apply the most stringent of regulations at home, including the conscription of skilled labor and the elimination of all domestic consumption of iron and cotton. It has also led to the bombings of civilians in Canton and Hankow which aroused indignation throughout the civilized world. Should the recent setbacks suffered by the Japanese army along the Yangtze and in Shansi lead to a further intensification of Japanese activity, serious trouble may be anticipated. Guerrilla warfare has already spread to Northern Manchuria, not far from the Soviet frontier.

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There have been new incidents in which Americans have been roughly treated by Japanese soldiers. Sensing Japan's weakness, the Western powers have suddenly become much more aggressive in defending their rights.

Japan appears to be headed for ultimate defeat. Its best chance lies in winning positive support from the fascist states that will offset, if not prevent, the growing pressure from the democracies. It may not get it. But the danger that the conflict will spread is clearly increasing. This danger will remain slight as long as the Western powers, including the United States, stand together in opposing the most wanton aspects of Japanese aggression. Should the democratic front crack under fascist or isolationist pressure, as it has in Spain, the next World War may start in the East.

Know Thine Enemy

WASHINGTON and Wall Street seem to have lain down side by side and effected, if not a peace, then at least a truce. The break in the united tory opposition to the New Deal came in the establishing of relations between the SEC and the Stock Exchange, and the humiliation of Wall Street over the Richard Whitney episode proved the final spur needed for reconciliation with the SEC and reorganization of the Exchange. Since then there have been conferences in Washington between industrial leaders and Administration spokesmen. *The Nation* tends to put little faith in the sincerity of the business leaders in these conferences. Their primary purpose is probably to keep the impending monopoly investigation from getting too rough. The primary purpose of the new administration of the Stock Exchange, under William M. Martin, Jr., will probably also be to keep the pursuit of speculative profit within limits that will not compel further government action. But this does indicate that there is a minority in business that does not share the suicidal opposition to even the mildest New Deal regulation or the obscene hatred of the President that characterizes our economic ruling class.

Radical thought in America has consistently suffered from the disease of failing to differentiate the degrees of hostility in the enemy's camp. We have been all too prone to lump and condemn—to consign the entire business community to the niche in our minds that we reserve for reactionaries. Actually businessmen are, except in periods of intense revolutionary stress, as little unified as their opponents. Capitalists differ in their blindness or vision, in the degree to which they resist the forces of social change or adjust themselves to those forces.

It is the beginning of wisdom in a political struggle to know your enemy, to know what divides him as well as what unites him, to estimate the inveteracy of his opposition and the limits within which he can be won over. Since much of American radical thought has grown up in the atmosphere of a confirmed opposition, safely distant from any prospect of achieving political power, there has always been more of a tendency to dismiss the capitalist as "Wall Street" or "Big Business" than to understand him. We have swallowed a stereotype without even breaking it up.

Even when we have sought to differentiate, we have had a vague idea that big industry is more reactionary than small industry, and the bankers more reactionary than both. Recent events have not borne this out. If anything, size works the other way. The Girdlers, for example, are far more bitter in their opposition to labor than the Morgans; Little Steel far tougher to organize than Big Steel. The way in which Myron Taylor and John L. Lewis negotiated an agreement may well be contrasted with Mr. Girdler's Memorial Day massacre. Nor is this an accident. It is the result of deep-lying psychological and historical factors.

In many instances finance capitalists will be found today less hostile to the New Deal than industrial capitalists. The difference between industry and finance is to be sought mainly in the fact that the industrialist is more directly involved in labor relations and in the price struggle than the finance capitalist. The former has the face-to-face contacts with labor grievances and pressures; he is more deeply caught up in the personal resentments they bring; it is he who has the insecurity of giving orders without being certain they will be obeyed, he whose authoritarianism is undercut by the labor organizers and the government administrators. The finance capitalist, on the other hand, is far away from the industrial processes themselves. They come to him filtered through the reports of industrial engineers, lawyers, plant managers. His perspective is broader, his pecuniary sense less clouded by direct resentments. Because his final passion is to embrace profits, he may come to see that government control and labor organization have a stabilizing effect.

The Girdlers and Taylors then are no accident. Girdler was a little Hitler whose sway in his own petty empire was being disputed by labor and the government; Taylor was a man of large experience who did not want the flow of European armament orders interrupted by labor disturbances. Nor is it an accident that the National Association of Manufacturers is more reactionary than the big banker groups. The evidence about the N. A. M. recently gathered by the La Follette committee, and given very little press attention, showed the extent to which the industrialists—especially the smaller ones—are willing to go in a propaganda campaign against labor and the Administration. The vigilante movements trace back to a similar source, and so do the Johnstown plans and the Mohawk Valley formulas. Most of those who have been watching the recent outcropping of Constitution

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Leagues, Committees for the Nation, super-patrioteering mobs, anti-Semitic propagandist groups, and fascist storm-troop training centers in America agree that the impulse for them generally comes from the industrialists, and most often the smaller ones.

This is, of course, only one broad line of distinction, but it serves to indicate the direction of fruitful analysis. Other distinctions may be made—between the heavy industries and the merchandising groups, between the above-margin producers and the sweated industries, and especially between the new and expanding fields of industrial exploitation that have been opened up and the older industries that are being pushed to the wall. We shall do well to remember that there are liberals even in the enemy's camp, and that an ounce of discrimination is worth a pound of indignation.

Three R's Beleaguered

THE convention of the National Education Association got more publicity than usual this year. This was due partly to the fact that it was held in New York City, and received the national coverage of the New York papers, and partly to the furore raised over the publication of William Gellermann's thesis, "The American Legion as Educator," which branded the Legion as a potentially fascist force. But while the Legion issue was an accidental one, it was no accident that the principal topics of discussion centered around the role of the public-school system in democratic survival at a time when democracy itself is under heavy fire. The three R's have never been so beleaguered and have never before had to carry so great a burden as they do today.

The N. E. A. itself has proved a slow-moving group, embodying all the inertias of the American social system. It is to American education what the A. F. of L. is to American labor. It has neither the educational vision of the Progressive Education Association nor the social militancy of the American Federation of Teachers. A large and, in terms of power, dominant portion of it consists of school superintendents, principals, department heads —the bureaucracy of American public-school education. To expect such a group to be progressive in its outlook would be utopian. And yet with this group, whatever its degree of progressivism, lies the task of passing the democratic heritage of one generation on to the next.

That is one of the striking paradoxes about our public-educational system as a whole. It is, to start with, an arm of the state, and as such it has been used by the ruling groups in our society as one of the principal methods of entrenching the economic status quo. In fact, from the beginning of our history the schools have lagged behind democratic advance rather than opened the way for it. But the other side of the shield is even more important. Education is the only safe dynamite that history has revealed for blasting away the obstructions of the past, the only sure method of consolidating for the future the gains that may be made in any period. Free and universal public education in America was one of the planks of the early labor platforms, and the struggle for education has gone hand in hand with the struggle for economic freedom and security.

Today, however, teachers are more bewildered than ever as to their path for the future. Their pay is too small for comfort, their classes too large for good results, their tenure too uncertain for security. Secretary Givens of the N. E. A., in his annual report, calls for "confidence in ourselves and just pride in our work" as the greatest needs of teachers today. But it is difficult to maintain confidence when you are living on the thin edge of things, or pride in your work when you are being hounded by patrioteers and witch-hunters in your community. And it is difficult to have blind faith in a social system under which more than two and a quarter million children of school age have no facilities for schooling of any sort, and many millions more get so little food or medical care as to make a farce of the democracy they are taught in the schools.

Above all, the schools are confused by the growing signs of reaction. Here and there an educator speaks passionately and clearly. Professor Alonzo F. Myers asked the teachers to "confess the sin of cowardice in refusing to face the issue raised by Mayor Hague." President Frank Kingdon of Newark University saw both Hague and the American Legion as symptoms of social disease, and demanded that the schools study the cure for it. Mayor La Guardia called for the mopping up of the black spots on the illiteracy map of America. But when the American Legion officials came down in full force to protest Dr. Gellermann's statement that "without knowing it the American Legion is a potential force in the direction of fascism," the N. E. A. officials got the jitters and issued all sorts of disclaimers.

It is all too easy to mouth the old platitudes about education being necessary to preserve our democracy, and the N. E. A. convention had its full share of such mouthings. The fact is that if democracy is taught as a catchword, as it has been hitherto, then further doses of education and literacy merely play into the hands of the Hagues and the reactionary Legion bureaucrats. What is needed is an educational system that trains students to see through catchwords and stereotypes, to understand the economic essentials of the national welfare, to understand that democracy means the dignity and security of the common man. What is needed, in short, is not education in static terms—not even education as a *defense* against anything, but a positive concept of education for an advancing democracy.

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Of Purges and Splurges

BY PAUL Y. ANDERSON

Washington, July 4

ONCE more Roosevelt is firmly planted in the driver's seat, and nothing in sight appears capable of dislodging him. It has now been demonstrated rather conclusively that his uncanny popularity is proof against depression, the newspapers, the Supreme Court, Jack Garner, organized business, and the antics of certain younger members of his own family. Even the continued presence of Homer Cummings and Uncle Dan Roper in the Cabinet has failed to shake public confidence in his administration. It is therefore gratifying to record that the purging of reactionary Democrats in Congress is to be prosecuted with diligence and vigor, and it is especially pleasing to note that its next immediate object will be John J. O'Connor, Representative of the Sixteenth District of New York and Chairman of the House Rules Committee.

It is fitting on this particular holiday for the Administration to declare its independence of a little gang of political highbinders who were temporarily successful, at critical stages of the last Congress, in making a mockery of the name of representative government. It is reported that O'Connor's New Deal opponent in the primary will be Mrs. Elinore Herrick, New York regional director of the National Labor Relations Board. She is a brilliant and courageous woman, and her record on labor matters is as good as O'Connor's is bad. No one could ask more. If the purge can be extended to Cox of Georgia, Smith of Virginia, Dies of Texas, and Driver of Arkansas, so much the better.

Incidentally, all the horrified outcries over the purge strike me as being ridiculous. When men have been elected and reelected on promises to support a President and his program, and have persistently betrayed the President and sabotaged his program, where is the sense or honesty in sobbing and snuffling all over the place that "brave men are being sacrificed because they remained true to their convictions"? That sort of argument is worthless even when it is not based on a falsehood. Plenty of men should be driven from public office because of their convictions. The late G. K. Chesterton, alluding to the myth that all wars result from misunderstandings, remarked: "If I hit a man it is not necessarily because I misunderstand him; I may hit him because I understand him only too well."

Although the political outlook is rosy enough, there is little evidence to support the sudden outburst of business optimism, and certainly none to warrant the spectacular spurt in stocks—unless it is conceded that stock prices have been unjustifiably low. Politicians generally welcome these manifestations, but government economists and statisticians are worried. Several factors indicate that this is a speculative market, in which the gullible will in due course be given a thorough cleaning. A few cold facts: Employment in May was off 300,000; in June it picked up probably less than 50,000. Farm income remains low, and there is nothing in prospect to explain the pyrotechnical flight in the stock prices of farm machinery manufacturers. Federal expenditures for public works can hardly be reflected in general business before October, except through limited anticipatory spending.

Worse still, powerful elements within the steel industry, including a faction in the United States Steel Corporation, are raising hell and high water for a wage cut because of recent slight price cuts. The price cuts resulted from an occurrence which terrified some leaders of the industry—to wit, a minor outbreak of competition. Some of the smaller companies, suffering from an unaccustomed attack of common sense, had decided it might be a good idea to sell some steel. With that end in view they reduced prices to a level approximately equal to that of 1929. Result: they sold some steel. Consternation swept the industry in its higher planes. They were compelled to compete!

With the exception of newspaper publishers, there probably is no class of industrialists so devoid of intelligent self-interest and so prone to senseless panic as the steel masters. That is particularly true of the older ones. To compete in the price field meant to them only one thing—wages must be cut. The condition of the industry —and of the country—should make it perfectly clear that what they need is volume. The automobile industry learned that lesson many years ago. The present depression has been no worse because the wage structure has held up fairly well—a condition for which the C. I. O. is largely to be thanked. A cut in steel wages might precipitate a collapse of the whole wage structure. Railroads, already trembling on the verge, would likely follow suit, and then the dam would go out with a roar. My spies (I have them in the most surprising places) report that Edward R. Stettinius is opposing the proposed cut strenuously, although some of his public utterances have tended to indicate the contrary. Finally, John Lewis, Phil Murray, and the men who make the steel will have something to say about that question. Cutting wages is not as

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simple as it used to be in the days before the C. I. O.

But let me hang my harp momentarily on the willow tree. The economic outlook is not solid indigo. Figures on file here indicate there has been a surprising relief in the inventory condition in automobiles and cotton textiles. One report has it that Mr. Alfred P. Sloan, just fresh from predicting that a minimum wage of $11 a week would bankrupt industry, may be compelled by the demand to make 10,000 more Chevrolets than were scheduled in advance of the model change. A great deal of British, French, and Dutch money is being shipped in for investment in American industry, which is a rather interesting commentary on the lamentations of Sloan and the other members of the Going-to-hell-in-a-hack Club. It is not unlikely that stocks *have* been too low. In any case, a lot of profits that were made last year are clamoring for reinvestment. While these things can produce a stock boom, the safest indicator of the country's condition is the number of unemployed, and no comfort can be found there—yet.

After living through several earlier administrations, this one looks pretty good to me, but it does some things I don't like and others I don't understand. I neither like nor understand the President's appointment of a commission to study British labor laws. All the information it can get could be obtained through the Department of Labor more quickly and at less cost. The commission's existence will serve as an excuse for all kinds of attacks on the NLRB. It has so served already. On this commission is Charles R. Hook, head of the American Rolling Mills and president of the National Association of Manufacturers. Hook was a member of the N. A. M. board when it conceived and launched the gigantic program of anti-labor propaganda exposed a few months ago by the La Follette Committee, including circulation of a pamphlet containing a glowing description of the Mohawk Valley Formula. And Hook's company is now embroiled in a dispute with its own employees and with the NLRB. Homer nodded, but Mr. Roosevelt sometimes goes sound asleep.

Divided Front in France

BY ROBERT DELL

Geneva, June 20

THE congress of the French Socialist Party, which convened at Royan on June 4, was in melancholy contrast to the congress held in Paris two years ago, on the eve of the formation of the Popular Front government. The enthusiasm and the unity of 1936 had vanished and in their place were depression and disunion. All Léon Blum's subtlety could not hide the fact that the Popular Front, of which there were such high hopes two years ago, had failed and no longer existed in anything but name. Unhappily, it is impossible not to state that Léon Blum has the greatest responsibility for the failure.

He himself admitted in his speech at the congress that mistakes had been made but, while he admitted mistakes in general, he did not admit any mistake in particular, either in his domestic or his foreign policy, and he defended one of the worst mistakes—the policy of so-called non-intervention in Spain. Although he said that he wished to deal with the Spanish policy of his Popular Front Cabinet with complete frankness, his defense of that policy was in fact anything but frank.

Léon Blum began by saying that military intervention in Spain in 1936 was impossible, for there was no majority in favor of it either in Parliament or in the country or even in the Popular Front. He thus made it appear that there were only two alternatives—military intervention and "non-intervention." I am obliged to say with deep regret that this was a misrepresentation of the facts. There was another possible policy in August, 1936, namely, that of simply maintaining the status quo and allowing the government of the Spanish Republic to buy freely whatever it wished to buy in France. This policy had the merit of being in accordance both with international law and with the particular engagements of France toward Spain, both of which were violated by the embargo of August 8, 1936. Moreover, it would have involved no risk of war. Blum deliberately confused the issue by making no mention of the embargo, although it was the crucial matter.

Had he mentioned it, it would have been impossible for him to defend his policy, for the embargo was not in the least a necessary consequence of the note sent by the French government on August 2 to the chief governments concerned proposing the adoption of common rules of non-intervention with regard to Spain. When that proposal was made, the French government had not thought of imposing an embargo unless and until all the governments appealed to agreed to do the same. Pending such agreement, it was the intention to give every facility to the Spanish government for buying war materials in France. Had this intention been adhered to, the Spanish civil war would in all probability have ended in two or three months with a Loyalist victory. The embargo was

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clamped on because after the warnings of the British ambassador the leading Radical members of the Cabinet threatened to resign if it were not imposed. Blum betrayed the Spanish Republic rather than risk a split in the Popular Front. It is true that the Communist Party urged him to yield to the Radicals rather than resign, as was his first intention, so the Communist Party shares his responsibility for the continuance of the Spanish civil war and the possible victory of Franco.

The imposition of the embargo was resented by at least nine-tenths of the rank and file of the Popular Front and in fact doomed it to failure. In the hope of appeasing the indignation of the workmen Blum rushed through much too hastily the social measures of the Popular Front program. In particular, the forty-hour week was introduced without proper preparation and applied in so foolish a manner that it seriously affected French production, and led to hardly any increase in the number of persons employed. There was, in particular, a great reduction in the output of coal. Factories worked only five days a week, without any system of shifts, and even the department stores and other big shops were closed on Mondays as well as Sundays. Undoubtedly employers adopted these methods with the deliberate intention of wrecking the forty-hour week and making it unpopular, but they should never have been allowed to do it. Between June, 1936, and May, 1938, there was an increase of only 105,000 in the staffs of establishments employing over 100 persons, and the number of completely unemployed persons, which was 419,000 in June, 1936, was still 394,000 in April, 1938. Finally, the situation became so serious in the industries working for national defense that the forty-hour week, although it is retained in principle, has, since the decree of May 24, 1938, disappeared in practice. All this could have been avoided had the transition to the forty-hour week been less rapid and had the way been properly prepared for it.

The Popular Front government, like all governments of the left in France, had to meet the attacks of the financial interests. That ought to have been expected and provided for in advance but, like the Herriot Cabinet in 1924, the Blum Cabinet had not the courage or the capacity to take the necessary steps in time. Vincent Auriol, whom Blum chose as finance minister, proved himself to be quite inadequate for the position. The fall in the franc exchange was not justified by the financial and economic situation and was undoubtedly engineered by the financial interests in London and Paris for political reasons. The way to meet it was exchange control, but the Blum Cabinet had not the courage to adopt so drastic a measure. Its financial, like its foreign, policy was dominated by London. It was this subservience to British dictation that was the fundamental cause of the failure of the Popular Front.

The subservience began from the very moment that the Blum Cabinet took office. The Spanish embargo of August 8, 1936, was not the first blunder made in foreign policy by the Blum Cabinet under British pressure. The first was the failure to accept at once the offer of a pact of mutual assistance made by Titulescu on behalf of the Little Entente in June, 1936. The offer was made also to Germany and, as was to be expected, the German government refused it at once. Blum and Delbos did not refuse it at once. They waited nearly four months to reply and when they did at last reply in the negative in October, 1936, it was already too late to reply in the affirmative. By then Titulescu had been dismissed and Rumania, like Yugoslavia, had been drawn into the German orbit. This was evident when a little later Blum and Delbos took fright and offered to make pacts of mutual assistance with Yugoslavia and Rumania if the governments of those two countries would agree to convert the pact of the Little Entente, which provided for mutual assistance only in the event of an attack on one of the parties by Hungary, into a general pact of mutual assistance against any aggression. Yugoslavia and Rumania refused.

France's refusal of the offer of the Little Entente was unknown to the French people at the time and is probably still unknown to the majority of them, for it has never been mentioned by the greater part of the French press. Naturally, Blum did not mention it in his speech at Royan. He would have had to explain that the reason why the offer was refused was that the British government made representations to the effect that its acceptance would irritate Hitler and Mussolini. At that time one of the chief aims of British policy was to come to an agreement with Mussolini and detach Italy from Germany. Ethiopia had been sacrificed to that end.

Léon Blum told the Socialist Congress at Royan that, when he ceased to be Prime Minister in June, 1936, the situation of France in Europe was better than it had been when he took office a year earlier. One wonders how many of the delegates believed it. In fact it was Blum's foreign policy that alienated all the allies and friends of France on the European continent with the sole exception of Czechoslovakia, and that allowed the British government to intern France in Western Europe. The League of Nations appears to be on the point of falling to pieces and collective security has gone by the board. As Winston Churchill said in a recent speech referring to the cant about dividing Europe into two armed blocs, there is at present a bloc on the fascist side and a rabble on the other, and two blocs would be preferable.

Blum's defense of the idea of collective security in his Royan speech was so confused as to be almost incomprehensible. He said that it was sometimes necessary to run the risk of war in order to avert war and that "the pacifists must make the others understand that if they

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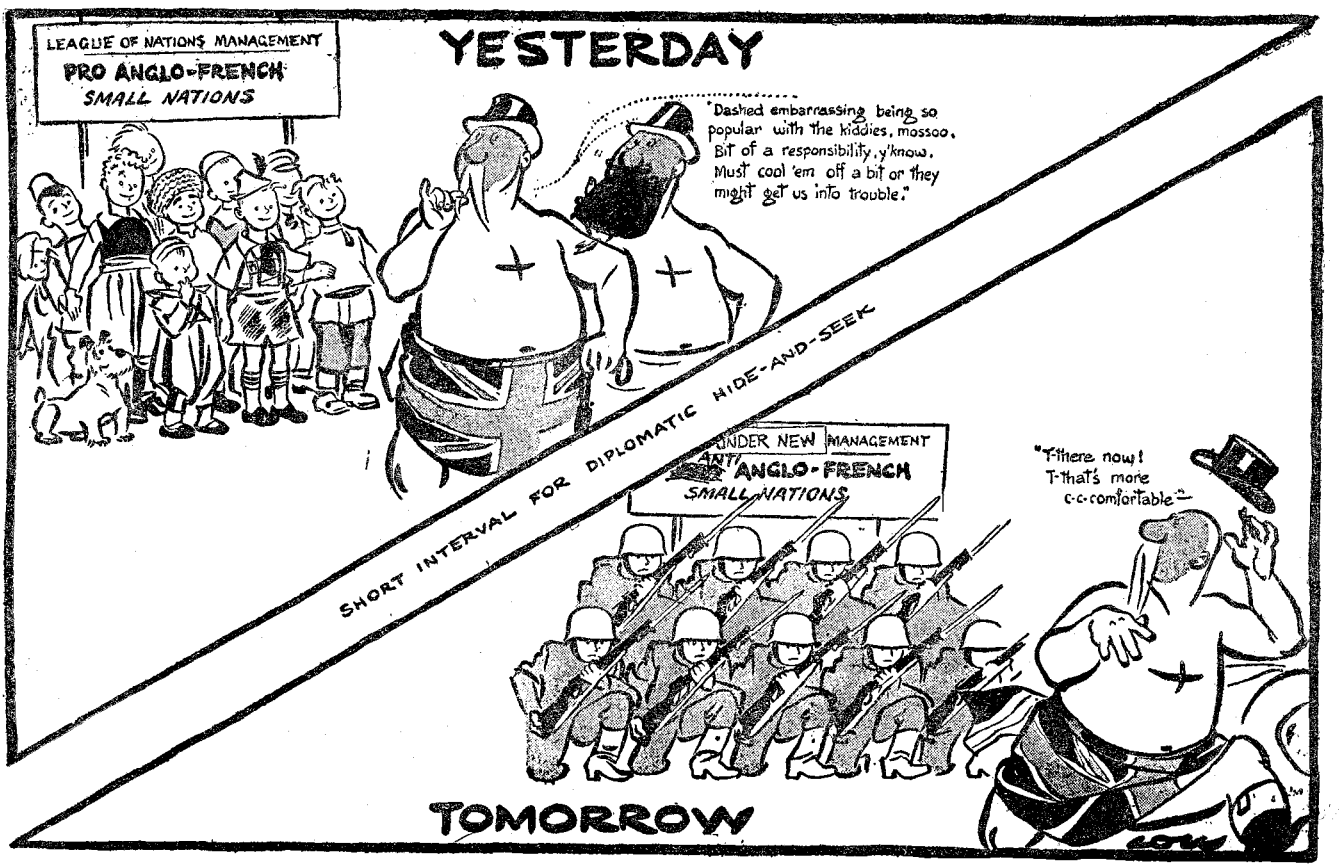
attack a given country they will come up against a common front." But he went on to say that collective security was not "really conceivable except between disarmed states" and that we must never "separate the idea of disarmament from the idea of collective security." What this can mean in the present state of Europe heaven alone knows. The truth is that the French Socialist Party is divided into warring factions and Blum was trying to satisfy all of them. His chief concern was to maintain a semblance of party unity at all costs.

Blum has given his support to the foreign policy of the Daladier Cabinet, which in fact does not differ from his own. There is not much doubt that when Daladier and Bonnet went to London in April they sold Spain to get British support in defense of Czechoslovakia against German aggression. It is reported that when Ribbentrop was informed by his friend the British pro-Nazi Ambassador in Berlin, Sir Nevile Henderson, that the British government would not tolerate a German invasion of Czechoslovakia, he was as much staggered as Bethmann-Hollweg was by the British ultimatum in August, 1914. He well might be, for it was a disagreeable surprise. It was the Czechoslovak mobilization that saved the situation, for if the Czechs had not thus shown their determination to resist attack, the British government would no doubt have allowed Hitler to do as he liked. Their mobilization led Daladier to tell the British government that, unless it took action at Berlin, France would mobilize at once. That clinched the matter.

The resolution that Blum presented to the Royan congress was, like his speech, an attempt to satisfy everybody. The passage concerning Spain declared that the essential object of the policy of non-intervention was to stop the intervention of the totalitarian powers in favor of the Spanish rebels and that there must be an end to the system of "public and almost licit intervention" on one side and non-intervention on the other. Blum, however, knows perfectly well that this system has constantly existed since August, 1936. If he really wishes to put a stop to it, why did he not agree to the resolution proposed by Zyromski, which demanded the public opening of the Franco-Spanish frontier and the restoration to the Spanish government of the right to buy arms and munitions in France?

Blum's attempt to satisfy everybody failed. His resolution was carried on a card vote by 4,872 against 3,165 votes. The minority was a large one but it was divided. There were 1,735 votes for Zyromski's resolution and 1,430 for that of the "revolutionary left," which is led by Marcel Pivert, who was not a delegate, he and his friends in the Department of the Seine having been excluded from the congress. The "revolutionary left" leaders have now decided to form a new party called the "Socialist Party of Workers and Peasants," with the class war as its primary principle. They are bitterly hostile to Soviet Russia and the Communist Party and are Trotskyist in tendency. Their new party will resemble the Spanish P. O. U. M. In foreign policy they approach



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the absolute pacifists, for Marcel Pivert advocates unilateral disarmament and is opposed to any intervention on behalf of Czechoslovakia or any other victim of aggression. Blum's resolution was supported by the absolute pacifist section which still remains in the party. This group, represented at the congress by L'Héveder, is in favor of almost unlimited concessions to Germany and Italy. Its exact strength is unknown, but its delegates at the congress do not appear to have been numerous. The section of the party led by Zyromski is in favor of unity of action with the Communists and of a firm policy in regard to the fascist powers. Its support in the rank and file of the party is probably much larger than would appear from the number of votes that it obtained at Royan.

It will be seen that the French Socialist Party is far from being in a healthy condition. As for the Popular Front, it is in fact broken up. The Radicals can no longer be said to belong to it and the official Socialist and Communist parties are no longer acting together. By reason of their divisions, the parties of the left are losing their hold on the country, and if there were a general election at this moment the center and the right would probably gain. The failure of the Popular Front has alienated a large number of the workmen who now proclaim their disgust with all political parties. In general, political conditions in France are disquieting.

The result of the first ballot in a by-election in the first division of Saint-Etienne on June 12 was significant. At the general election in 1936 the three parties of the Popular Front had an aggregate vote of 12,429 on a total poll of 20,210. The Communist candidate who headed the poll had 7,081, the Radical 3,895, and the Socialist 1,453. On June 12 the aggregate vote of the three parties was only 9,014 on a total poll of 17,853. The Communists lost 2,370 votes and the Radicals 2,707, but the Socialists gained 1,662. The aggregate vote of the opposition was 1,058 more than in 1936. The two fascist parties, those of Colonel de la Rocque and Jacques Doriot, who had no candidates in 1936, polled respectively 1,221 and 1,121 votes. The probability is that the Socialist gain was at the expense of the Radicals and that the decline in the Communist vote was due to abstentions from voting. Some of the electors that voted Radical in 1936 probably held that party mainly responsible for the break-up of the Popular Front and therefore voted Socialist, while others went over to the opposition. Undoubtedly the reason for the decline in the Communist vote was that the Communist Party has put itself in a false position by opposing in the press and in public meetings the Spanish policy of the Blum Cabinet and the Cabinets that have succeeded it while at the same time voting for them in Parliament. Many people feel that the Communists have thus sacrificed Spain for the supposed interest of their party and to considerations of internal politics.

Secret Movie Censors

BY WINCHELL TAYLOR

Hollywood, June 26

WALTER WANGER, producer of "Blockade," was to have started production during the week of June 27 on "Personal History," but on June 25 he suddenly changed his plans. His reason for doing so is at once a warning and a challenge. He is afraid that the reactionary drive against "Blockade" may put that picture in the red and that it would be repeated to make "Personal History" a failure.

The screen play of "Personal History," like that of "Blockade," was written by John Howard Lawson and, although it is an original fictional story, it echoes the anti-fascist theme of Sheean's book. If there is a difference in political emphasis between the original and the screen play, it lies in the latter's more pointed partiality for American democracy. One would think that the objections to "Blockade," which is accused of taking sides in the Spanish war, could not apply to a film extolling American democracy; yet Wanger's judgment, based on a long history of movie-making, is sound. The attack on "Blockade" is fundamentally an attack not so much on an inferentially pro-Loyalist film, as on the whole idea of making films on serious social and political themes. And in that respect the two films have much in common.

This is nothing new—certainly not to producer Wanger, whose "The President Vanishes" and "Night Mayor" (based on Jimmy Walker) aroused considerable intra-industry protest. It was even stated—in a friendly manner, of course, but it is not hard to sense a threat beneath the solicitude—that if movie producers made such films, it would throw the door wide open to anti-Semitism. The Hays office and the bankers were responsible for this sort of advice. Wanger and others, notably Warner Brothers, have bucked the ban on significant films, frequently with success. But the gang-up on "Blockade" is so serious as to give them pause.

The major campaign against the film has not been a public one. True, Catholic pickets have appeared at Radio City Music Hall in New York with their fantastic accusation of "war propaganda," the Knights of Colum-

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bus and other Catholic groups have protested to the Hays office and released their objections to the press, and priests have been telling their parishioners to stay away from the film. All this has had its effect, particularly in localities with large Catholic populations. Nevertheless, the first week brought nearly $70,000 to the Music Hall, a house where $80,000 is considered definitely good—and this in a period of general box-office slump. *Variety*, moreover, listed "Blockade" as "okay" in two Los Angeles theaters, "big" in San Francisco, "very good" in Cincinnati, and "okay" in Seattle (it had not yet opened in Chicago, Boston, and Philadelphia).

But despite this very fair first-run showing the powerful Fox-West Coast theater chain has refused to take "Blockade" as a regular first feature, offering instead to book it at a couple of houses for top billing, and to run it as a second feature (at corresponding rentals) through the rest of the chain. This is the sort of thing that can kill a picture; indeed, if it should happen to two films in succession, it might very well hamstring a producer of relatively limited resources. Yet this most potent type of film censorship escapes public knowledge.

Everyone in Hollywood is aware of the existence of this behind-the-scenes censorship. If it happens that Will Hays doesn't like a movie but can't find that it violates the motion-picture production code for which he is the watchdog, he can pick up the telephone, call up, let's say, Louis B. Mayer, and say he thinks such and such a film will have a bad effect on business; he suggests that Mayer do something to minimize the danger. Mr. Mayer then calls up Schenck of Loew's, Kent of Fox, and Freeman of Paramount, and presto! three of the most powerful theater chains refuse to run the film. Interment follows. Of course, this method has its imperfections, for if a film has a good first-run box-office, it is very hard to kill. But plans are afoot to plug such loopholes in the censorship machine.

Mr. Hays was away when the script of "Blockade" was submitted for approval, in accordance with standard practice. Joseph Breen, Hays's right-hand man and a Catholic, gave it his "okay" and, moreover, personally congratulated Wanger. But while the picture was still in the making, considerable pressure was brought to bear, both from within and without the industry. Church influence was applied to Wanger's Catholic financial backers. Important personages in the film industry took the producer aside and said it would be bad for business, and asked him why he had to stick his neck out. He was becoming rather worried when two things occurred to stiffen his back: his distributors in London cabled news of Generalissimo Franco's impending "bitter resentment," and three "sneak" previews showed an unusual degree of audience enthusiasm. He decided to go ahead.

It is not true, as has been reported in *Life* and repeated elsewhere, that the film was submitted to Franco's and Mussolini's agents in Naples for approval. The real story is that Breen and Wanger were discussing the Franco threat and wondering why he felt that way; Breen said he was going to Europe and might go to Naples and suggested that he might take a print along just to see what the reaction would be. Wanger, genuinely if perhaps somewhat naively, convinced that his film took no sides in the Spanish war, agreed. Meanwhile he went ahead making other prints and booking his first-runs, with no notion of making changes, whatever the reaction might be in Naples. Breen, as a matter of fact, never got to Naples, and neither did his print of "Blockade." He went instead to London, where United Artists grabbed the film and started showing it at once to record-breaking attendance. If the Franco and Mussolini London agents saw it, they saw it in a houseful of cheering Britishers. That may be one reason why no official protest has come from any foreign source as yet. The film continues to do a whirlwind business in both England and France.

Immediately after the American preview, the storm broke. Church pressure was exerted on W. G. Van Schmus, Catholic managing director of Radio City Music Hall, to prevent him from booking the film. The audience-reaction cards from the previews, however, were too powerful an augury of good business. The Hollywood *Reporter* ran a front-page story about the film's "poor" opening at the Music Hall, giving the first day's receipts as $8,500. The correct figures for that day were $10,600. The *Motion Picture Daily* and *Motion Picture Herald*, edited and published by Martin Quigley, a Catholic, launched a series of attacks on "Blockade." The Hollywood *Reporter* followed up with a story charging Wanger with having trumped up the Catholic opposition for publicity purposes. Then came the body blow: the refusal of Fox-West Coast to book for regular second-run chain release.

Most sinister, however, and one of the most significant aspects of the war against serious films was the action taken to plug the censorship loophole by the recent Cleveland convention of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, which organizes all cameramen, electricians, laboratory men, and technicians in both the producing studios and the theaters. This union, notorious for its reactionary bureaucracy, recently adopted a resolution in which it declared its opposition to the inclusion of propaganda in any film, "whether in the name of entertainment or otherwise, glorifying any other form of government than that of the United States." At first blush this may seem only the garden variety of patrioteering-by-resolution, but what followed gave it a somewhat more dubious color. After the convention, the I. A. T. S. E. let it be known that it would presently inform producers that it "will not be responsible for the handling of propaganda films by its members." Which means that a projectionist

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could refuse to show a "Blockade" or a "Personal History," and the union would protect him in so doing. Small likelihood, you might say, that a projectionist would care enough one way or the other to refuse to show a film, but that too has been considered. The I. A. T. S. E. plans to request producers to form with them a permanent joint committee to discuss some kind of classification for propaganda films. The argument will be that it is better to have a committee making classifications of propaganda films than for individuals or locals to attempt to make individual judgments. If the committee were to decide that a film was "propaganda" and a theater owner, refusing to take the hint, still perversely insisted on showing it, the I. A. T. S. E. could then see to it that the theater's projectionist was made sufficiently aware of the propaganda content to decline to screen it.

If this scheme goes through, those who would censor American films have a perfect apparatus through which to work. They will be able to prevent in an absolute sense the test which "Blockade" is now making, to determine whether American audiences like thoughtful films. The reactionaries are hell-bent on preventing that test from being completed, because if the public clearly says it likes serious films, producers and theater owners will make and show them. If "Blockade" does well on its second, third, and fourth runs, Wanger may reconsider making "Personal History." And M-G-M may stop hesitating about the anti-war "Idiot's Delight." Support for "Blockade" of the most concrete sort—the patronage of the film and demands on theater managers to show it—will go far toward winning the right of the American people to be the sole judges of what they want movies to be.

Railroad Equipment and Recovery

BY ELIOT JANEWAY

WILL the Roosevelt Administration fall into the easy error of assuming that private industry is really capable of ending the depression at the present time, and that the boom in the stock market heralds a real renewal of recovery? Or will it listen to advisers who tell it that industry is in no position to pull itself out of the mire? The question is a vital one, for with building dragging on only by grace of the government, with the auto industry and the railroads hopelessly bogged down, it is in fact government alone which can force the beginning of a healthy expansion. There are several possible long-term programs for such expansion, such as building and soil erosion relief, but speed is the urgent factor if production is to pick up before a lower drop occurs. It is for this reason that the group in the Administration which is anxious for capital investment to begin has turned to pump-priming through the railroads as one of the most efficient ways of putting the government's money to work.

Two months ago I discussed in *The Nation* the wrong way of using the railroads as a lever for recovery—the way in which Jesse Jones's RFC has substituted for a real pump-priming program, which would utilize the enormous purchasing power of the roads, relief measures which ineffectively attempted to shore up the crumbling bond structure of the roads, which added to their debt and encouraged them to curtail their expenditures in order to service their ruinous interest charges. My present purpose is to show that, if the interest drain can be stopped and normal railroad expenditures restored through the aid of government funds, the force of such purchases will quickly make itself felt all over the country, in rural districts as well as industrial areas.

Railroad purchasing power cannot be overestimated. Last year, when railroad spending was still substantially below the 1929 level, the roads spent $1,184,175,000 on supplies and equipment alone, about twice the rate of the depression low. The buying was spread all over, purchases being made in all but 435 of the nation's 3,072 counties. One small road, for instance, the Bangor and Aroostook, did its buying in 29 states; in Alabama alone purchases were made by 75 roads, 65 of them lines that had no track in that state. Spending was heaviest in the industrial states—Pennsylvania accounted for half a billion including taxes—but even out-of-the-way states received some, like Idaho, where the roads spent $12,000,000.

But railroad spending in the first four months of 1938 dropped to less than half of what it was last year. It was still above the amount spent in 1932 and 1933, but more than $80,000,000 less than in 1931. Just as startling is the fact that in April railroad employment reached a new low, with 6,811 men less than were employed in March, 1933, the low point of the depression. Employment had fallen more than 19 per cent from the preceding April, and on most roads only men with 20 or 30 years' seniority were working full time. It is understandable that the Railway Brotherhoods are not being "cooperative" about the proposed 15 per cent wage cut. The men feel they have already taken their cut in the form of lay-offs, and it is certain that railroad payrolls will not touch the two-billion-dollar figure of 1937.

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What should disturb the railroads themselves most, however, are their curtailments of necessary maintenance expenditures. The result of this short-sighted policy is to force up operating expenses because of the use of equipment in need of repair, and to hasten the coming of complete obsolescence. As the roads' 1937 experience showed, the maintenance deferred during depression must be made up during recovery to the loss of what should be legitimate recovery earnings. The maintenance programs under way in 1937 carried through to the end of the year, but the drop came fast thereafter. In the first four months of 1938, $72,600,000 less was spent on maintenance than in the first four months of 1937. The figure would be greater if the bankrupt roads, controlled by the courts, had followed the lead of their still solvent fellows in cutting expenditures. But the worst offenders in this wave of maintenance cutting are precisely those roads which survived the last depression. The Pennsylvania, for example, cut maintenance by over a third in the first quarter of the year, and other gilt-edged roads are storing up trouble for themselves in the same way. One unwholesome aspect of the problem is that by cutting maintenance the roads stop their consumption of inventories; the industry as a whole ended 1937 with $80,000,000 more inventory than was on hand at the end of 1936. This is anti-social enough; but still more dangerous is the fact that many roads, because of deferred maintenance purchases, are skirting the accident danger line, as managements have admitted to responsible government officials. The plight of half a dozen almost bankrupt roads is sadly reminiscent of the St. Louis-San Francisco Railroad before its bankruptcy in the early days of the depression, when, in spite of 25 rail breaks a day, it continued to make payments on its securities with cash which was being deliberately diverted from repair bills, while its shops remained shut for 182 consecutive days.

The collapse of railroad spending has certainly been one of the factors contributing to the depression, and by the same token the roads present the most immediate opportunity of promoting a recovery movement. They act as a lever, which can be thrown one way or another, either way affecting the whole fabric of American industry. What the government is being urged to do is to throw this lever on the spending side. The first step toward recovery must be bankruptcy—or at the very least a moratorium—for all roads not earning their interest on the basis of necessary maintenance charges. Extending even to roads like the Pennsylvania, such an interest moratorium would free about $350,000,000. The total of maintenance deferred by the roads could absorb this $350,000,000 without the least trouble. Instead of flowing through a short and sterile course to the pockets of the bondholders, where government hand-outs to the railroads now end, these millions would go into productive use for the employment of men and the purchase of materials.

Managements of course do not like to think they have been forced to the point of bankruptcy. They do not enjoy the prospect of sharing control with trustees appointed by the courts. But the argument used most frequently and forcibly against bankruptcies is that of the disaster to the bondholders, who, if no longer all widows and orphans, do include savings banks and insurance companies. There is just one reply to this argument, and that is that one third of the railroad mileage in the country is already in bankruptcy. The proposal is not to put the railroad bondholders to the knife—for they are facing that already. New York is the most recent addition to the long list of states which prohibited savings banks from acquiring "border-line" railroad bonds. It is simply a question of getting the operation over as quickly and as painlessly as possible while there is still time to save the rest of our economy from another plunge toward the bottom we were trying to find in 1932.

As for the insurance companies, a crisis growing out of the present depression would threaten them with a disaster a great deal more serious than the further writing off of their railroad securities. The collapse of real estate values in a depression would mean the shrinkage of insurance holdings on a much larger scale. And most dreadful thought of all, consider what a prolonged depression would do to the ability of the public to buy new insurance or pay premiums on existing policies. May life insurance sales fell off 22.9 per cent from May, 1937. Moreover, against the argument based on the vulnerability of banks and insurance companies to railroad bankruptcy, we have the authoritative word of Jesse Jones himself, that arch foe of bankruptcy. When Interstate Commerce Commissioner Splawn, a member of the President's recent three-man railroad committee, urged special loans for rail bonds held by banks, Jones wrote to the President: "I do not believe banks hold enough railroad securities to require this procedure. Furthermore, we can give the banks any help they may need. . . . The same applies to insurance companies." But the most forcible statement of all comes from E. T. Weir, who told the writer that most railroad bonds have declined sufficiently to discount the effect of bankruptcies, and went on to say that at a White House conference some months ago, his advice to the President had been to let the roads go through the wringer. When, according to Weir, the President replied that he would have every investor in the country after him if he followed such a policy, Weir replied, "No, you would have them going back to work"—which is another way of saying that the railroads would again be buying steel.

Last April the President's railroad committee, consisting of Interstate Commerce Commissioners Splawn, Eastman, and Mahaffie, made its report. Its recommendation was for twelve-month loans to the roads, waiving

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the question of whether roads applying needed reorganization. Jesse Jones, to whom the report was sent by the President, added a footnote suggesting that the loans be made for an indefinite period. As Jones's record shows, he is anxious to stave off bankruptcies regardless of the property deterioration which results from maintaining interest rather than equipment. But Commissioners Eastman and Mahaffie do not agree with Jones in regarding bankruptcy as a calamity to be avoided at the cost of employment and business activity. Actually bankruptcies, freeing money which would be used for maintenance, would immediately be reflected in rising employment and increased consumption of materials. Add to this the proposed $800,000,000 government loans for new equipment and you would have the steel rate rising at least 20 points, with employment and other standard indices following suit. This rise in productive activity, guaranteeing a rise in industrial earnings, would immediately be reflected in new and warranted strength in the stock market, which would almost certainly offset a falling bond market and suffice to avert a panic.

The prospect of further bankruptcies, or at the very least of many interest suspensions, is made inevitable by the adjournment of Congress without taking action on the railroads. Realizing this, a number of large insurance companies, evidently led by the Metropolitan itself, have agreed with the management of the Lehigh Valley for an interest suspension on junior bonds. The same kind of negotiations for temporary relief, which will probably not stave off bankruptcy, are taking place in the case of other embarrassed roads. The agreement of the insurance companies to the scheme is evidently based, says the *Wall Street Journal*, "on the contention that existing holdings would be strengthened if the railroads are not forced to go further into debt to pay interest on their securities when it is not earned."

But, bankruptcies or no bankruptcies, loans will be necessary. The only question is whether they are to go to tottering roads to be uneconomically absorbed in interest charges, or to roads no longer burdened with enormous interest payments, where a loan can be put productively to work and secured by equipment which the roads need. Large-scale buying of equipment by the railroads is not as Utopian as it may sound. Congressional legislation is not needed to enable the RFC to provide loans for this purpose. Federal Reserve Governor Eccles, suggesting the offer of loans by the RFC on favorable terms (probably with the government paying interest and amortization for the first two years), found "no reason why hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of needed new equipment and deferred maintenance should not be contracted for without delay. . . Modern equipment is badly needed, and as recovery proceeds great shortages will exist. Therefore, the time when its construction should be done is now when it will do the most good." Another suggestion worthy of consideration is that the government begin a large-scale equipment-buying program now, through a federal Railway Equipment Corporation, the equipment to be rented out to the roads. The chief objection to this scheme apparently is the fear that railroad managements, preferring not to operate government-owned equipment, would sabotage the plan. Then there is the proposal to institute large-scale equipment loans with the equipment itself as security. While it would be difficult to segregate new track laid with such loans, few railroad bonds have proved to be safer in the past than equipment trust certificates issued on just such a basis. Even the certificates of the Baltimore and Ohio are selling at 90 or over.

What would probably be the most desirable approach if it could be put into effect envisages the RFC as underwriter for Wall Street houses which would in turn underwrite equipment certificates of bankrupt roads, the RFC agreeing to buy those certificates which the investing public did not take. Such loans after all are gilt-edged; they come ahead of all existing, pre-bankruptcy debt and are secured by this modern equipment. It would be highly desirable for private capital to go to work on such a scale, obviating the need for government pump-priming altogether. Private capital has now no comparable medium of secure investment. But would Wall Street and the insurance companies, so soon after suffering losses on existing rail debt, hurry to put the better part of a billion dollars into fresh securities of even this caliber? And could private capital swing such a huge investment in the short time at hand? It is this consideration which seems to argue most strongly for governmental action as offering the best chance of turning the tide in time. Any one of these loan plans, however, would be a self-liquidating project.

There is no question about the need of the roads for equipment. In 1937 the railroads experienced a car shortage, and every day that passes sees obsolescence grow more acute. The powerful new locomotives that some roads acquired last year are being run over old tracks and with ancient signal systems that make it impossible for them to be run at full speed. And the work that such buying would provide is impressive. To build a freight car requires materials from 31 different states and provides 1,987 man-hours of work—approximately a year's work for one man. The building of one locomotive gives 50 men full-time work for one year and requires materials from more than 30 states. Of the money put into all types of railroad work, about 20 cents of each dollar goes immediately into labor, the rest into materials. But the unique advantage of spending in these capital goods industries is that all these orders for materials force increased capital expenditures on the part of private industry and pyramid employment in geometric proportion to the original outlay. To illustrate this, the

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Department of Labor has prepared a comprehensive breakdown tracing back the man-hours required to build 100,000 fifty-ton box cars, all the way from equipment shops, through foundries and steel mills, to coal mines and brick yards. To produce these 100,000 cars, the number that should be built annually to overcome the present shortage, would require nearly 227,000,000 man-hours, or a year's employment for 115,000 men. Locomotives, track, and shop equipment must be added, all of them equally potent providers of employment. Here is a unique opportunity to spread employment and increase production throughout the country with record speed. Will the Administration continue to turn a deaf ear to those of its members who have been telling it to face the facts?

In the Wind

EACH MONTH members of the Communist Party unit at the New York *Times* secretly publish a bulletin called the *New Times*. According to the last issue, the *Times's* owners are actively seeking a successor to Dr. John Finley, the present editor. They are now negotiating, this report asserts, with Franklin D. Roosevelt. Arthur Krock is named as the runner-up.

IN THE recent Minnesota primary a large section of the press was bitterly arrayed against Governor Benson. So strong was this opposition that, on the morning after the election, when the final vote was not yet known, the Minneapolis *Tribune* carried this streamer: BENSON DEFEATED BY 50,000. And the Minneapolis *Journal:* PETERSEN BEATS BENSON IN SMASHING PRIMARY UPSET. As our readers will recall, Benson won.

DESCRIBING AN address by Mrs. Elizabeth Dilling, author of the notorious "Red Network," before the New Jersey Branch of the American Women Against Communism, the *Hudson-Dispatch* of Union City reported:

> The well-known Chicago lecturer lauded Mayor Hague . . . and declared that Jersey City is the dope of the nation.

THE PRESS recently gave extensive space to the survey by Professor William Gellermann of Northwestern University denouncing the American Legion as "fascist." The story was linked to the opening of the N. E. A. convention in New York. Actually the same story, based upon the same survey, was released to all the New York papers last summer. None of them gave it a line of space.

TWO WEEKS ago this column reported that two men upon whom the government depended heavily in its prosecution of the Aluminum Company had been hired by that firm. Another sidelight on the same trial concerns the law firm with which Attorney General Cummings was formerly associated. Two of its chief members—Mark Norman and Edward C. Park—now get retainers from the Aluminum Company.

AT THE twenty-fifth reunion of the Cornell class of 1913, the graduates marched around the campus in white uniforms trimmed in red. As they invaded the beer parlors, they sang a song which has become popular in recent months:

> Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!
> We've joined the C. I. O.
> We've paid our dues to the goddam Jews,
> Heigh-ho, heigh-ho. . . .

THE GERMAN government has made arrangements for the construction of at least four additional east-west military railway lines. The move is designed to improve communications between Vienna and Bavarian cities. It was prompted by the meagerness of communications facilities between Germany and Austria which was partly responsible for the serious delays and breakdowns that occurred during Hitler's invasion of Austria.

IN THE South China *Morning Post* the following apology for an embarrassing error was recently published:

> By an unfortunate mischance . . . two reports on the same subject [the observance of Empire Day] became mixed, with the result that Professor C. A. Middleton Smith was represented as addressing Rotarians as children, while Father Winstanley was alleged to have made jokes about Scotsmen in his sermon at the Catholic Cathedral. . . .

THE MAGAZINE *Horoscope* has reported on the horoscopes of William Green, John L. Lewis, Heywood Broun, Harry Bridges, William Z. Foster, and Earl Browder. It reached the conclusion that "none of these leaders have horoscopes that would appear to warrant the Red Scare that is generally broadcast with the mention of their names. From the capitalistic point of view the labor movement is 'safe' so long as it is in their hands. . . ."

AROUND-THE-WORLD: Apparently the "national" airmen in Franco's service do not know the Spanish language; the *Heraldo de Aragon* recently published an order designating thirty Italian and German interpreters for service in the insurgent airdromes. . . . Rumanian members of the Iron Guard have been ordered to give up smoking in protest against government "persecution" of Codreanu; tobacco is a government monopoly. . . . Breaking a long-standing precedent which dictates swift publication of all letters by foreign ambassadors, the London *Times* recently refused to print a letter from the Loyalist ambassador in London. . . . A minor incident has been created in preparations for the coming World Youth Congress to be held at Vassar; French delegates insist upon wine with their meals. The Bulgarian League of Abstinent Youth won't participate if wine is served. . . . After a world-wide search, the League of Nations has awarded "Marco Polo" its prize for the best film of the year. . . . Boys in the Lincoln Brigade were recently distressed at receiving a batch of cook-books in response to pleas for literature.

[*We invite our readers to submit material for In the Wind—either clippings with source and date or stories that can be clearly authenticated. A prize of $5 will be awarded each month for the best item.*—EDITORS THE NATION.]

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

THE tragic and needless death of James Weldon Johnson has brought grief to me as to thousands of others. It was only the other day that I had lunch with him at a committee meeting in relation to the World's Fair. I am happy to recall that I told him as we parted how greatly I missed seeing him regularly and begged him to call me up when next in town so that we could have a real communion: "There are so many, many things I want your judgment on and the years are passing so quickly." He promised—but will now never keep that promise. Some may say: "Well, he was sixty-seven and had had a fine and interesting life." Yes, but that is the wrong way to look at this disaster. Johnson was much too young to lose, and the country—both whites and colored—could not afford to spare him, for there are too few comparable with him. He was not old. As we shook hands the last time he seemed not a day older than in those years when he and I and many others were working together in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

What a life he had lived! He was successively a high-school teacher and principal and then a popular song writer—as the *Times* put it: "From 1901 to 1906 the Johnsons were the top-notch composers of American popular music"—he and his brother, J. Rosamond Johnson. They were almost on their uppers in New York when they had the inspiration to turn the melody of an old hymn into what became a great hit. On the proceeds of one of these songs, something like $10,000, they cut loose and went to France, where they lived the life of the gayest dogs until the last cent was gone. Then they came back to do some more songs and replenish their purses. Next Theodore Roosevelt appointed James United States Consul at Puerto Cabello, Venezuela, and later he served at Corinto, Nicaragua, succeeding amazingly well in both posts, especially when the customary Nicaraguan revolutions were on, in which, the official records prove, he showed rare nerve and tact.

Thereupon he turned writer and made a sensation with his anonymous "Autobiography of an ex-Colored Man," reprinted over his name in 1927. Poetry came next; all told there are three volumes. He also published "The Book of American Negro Poetry," "The Book of American Negro Spirituals," and the "Second Book of Negro Spirituals." Finally there appeared his modest and in spots thrilling autobiography "Along This Way," and "Negro Americans, What Now?" For years he was the able secretary of the militant N. A. A. C. P., fighting the battles of his race and, since 1930, in calm waters, professor of creative literature at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, and also visiting professor of literature at New York University.

Always he was supremely modest and usually of quiet demeanor until he was aroused. There was nothing servile but also nothing aggressive about him. He was an American citizen who did not have to take his hat in hand to anybody; who knew his rights and his duties. He was the personification of good manners and courtesy, whether receiving a president of another republic, or American naval officers astounded to find a Negro who spoke both French and Spanish in charge of an American consulate, or some ill-mannered, overbearing Southerner. But there was a limit beyond which no man could go with him and not pay well for it. He could fight. Here was no coward, no toady—just a fine gentleman, as well bred and cultured as any man who ever came out of a Southern manor-house, or a mansion on Washington Square.

He knew life in its every phase, white and black, and saw through it. No race bogy, none of the Aryan stuff about the white man alone being able to rule, bothered him. He knew too much about that rule and the morals of his conceited, white brethren. He merely sat with controlled face, laughing within, never discouraged or without hope of a better world, with a judgment sane, calm, and detached. I always felt his sincerity as I did his courage; and how I loved his laugh! His sense of humor served him no end. When boorish white men lectured and condescended to him I think it was harder for him to control his risibles than his ire.

Southerners constantly say to me: "You do not know the Negro problem because you have not lived in the South." My answer is: "*You* cannot know the Negro problem because you have not lived in the North and known on terms of absolute equality James Weldon Johnson, Leslie Hill, Walter White, W. E. B. DuBois, John Hope, the college president, Col. Charles Young, West Pointer, A. Philip Randolph"—but why go on? The list is long and growing. The Southerner knows the Negro of the past; I know him of the future. No one on that list today is more charming, more versatile, more of life and more against it, none wiser or more philosophical than was James Weldon Johnson. He knew Prejudice, looked it squarely in the eyes—and conquered it.

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

JEROME FRANK'S WAY OUT

BY REINHOLD NIEBUHR

JEROME FRANK, who is one of the potent left-wingers of the Roosevelt Administration, once active in the NRA and the AAA and now serving the SEC, is a lawyer with a penchant for social philosophy. His ambitious book,* in which he ranges over vast areas of anthropology, economics, history, and political science, contains the makings of several books. He confesses that the finished product, which bears the title "Save America First," was begun under the caption "The Overthrow of the Dictatorship of the Vocabulary" and in subsequent, but not final, form had the label: "Our New Aladdin's Lamp." He has been able to relegate some of his earlier theses as, for instance, the one on the misuse of words (a theme which Stuart Chase probably spoiled for him), and another on the relation of accident to law in history, to the position of minor motifs in his symphony. But the symphony remains, for all that, filled with dissonance, not so much because he has been unable to integrate the minor motifs into his major theme but because he has two major themes which partially contradict each other.

His two themes are (1) that America by reason of her continental unity is not subject to the tendencies and developments of European economic and political life and will be able to escape the alternatives of fascism and communism which seem to exhaust the possibilities for Europe; and (2) that the modern profit system will not work if it is not able to provide greater purchasing power for the general consumer. He thinks he can bring these two major theses into terms of mutual support by proving that the plight of European nations is due primarily to the lack of an integrated continental economic system and that American living standards can be raised, primarily because we have a national and continental unity of economic life which does not depend upon foreign trade for its prosperity. But in spite of himself all the final chapters of his book deal, not with the problem of increasing the total productivity of the American economy but with that of persuading, prompting, and forcing the small oligarchy which controls American business to increase the living standards of the workers.

> If [he declares] those who control our key industries block an intelligent reorganization of our profit system, and if, while they retain their control no real or lasting prosperity is attained . . . there will come a time when intelligent popular leaders . . . will persuasively urge millions of Americans to get behind a plan for the socialization of our key industries . . . as a way out of grave difficulties, a way which avoids the evils of both communism and fascism, a way out which will preserve most of our American traditions. Such an appeal will be popular. . . . Against it fascism might win out in popular esteem but the odds are opposed. And a resort to civil war would ultimately be none too healthy for the powerful minority.

Mr. Frank arrives at this remarkable conclusion after devoting half of his volume to the proposition that "this country has a fortunate advantage that exempts it from all the European rules and frees it from dependence on world trade and the consequent embroilments in world disasters." We are freed from European rules; our system must not be called capitalism, though perhaps "neo-capitalism" might be allowed; capitalism is really nothing more than the behavior of British industrialism during the nineteenth century which Marx foolishly raised to the eminence of a general law; we are not bound to follow the strategies of British industrialism; we are not dependent upon world trade but can establish a self-sufficient economy (which will not, however, exclude genuinely reciprocal trade); we therefore do not face the twin evils of fascism and communism. Yet by Mr. Frank's own admission we have a "profit system." In spite of our self-sufficiency and our exemption from "all European rules" we have an oligarchy which controls the essential economic power of modern society; which must be persuaded not to be stupid in its use; which must be shorn of some of its power; which will be tempted to risk desperate fascist measures to prevent the use of political power for the equalization and socialization of economic power; but which had better not be quite as stupid as to try that alternative because the democratic tradition is a more genuine inheritance of our "folkways" than of any European country. It is only in this last proposition that Mr. Frank presents a plausible instance of American "exceptionalism." And even on this point one might question whether the democratic tradition has more power here than in England.

How does this intelligent and honest political reformer arrive at such contradictory conclusions? By defining capitalism, for one thing, not as the private ownership of the means of production but as the policy of

* "Save America First." By Jerome Frank. Harper and Brothers. $3.75.

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industrial imperialism which seeks to compensate for inadequate domestic markets by unreciprocal foreign trade; by then dropping out a part of his definition and making European capitalism mean simply dependence upon foreign trade while American economy is not; by defining Marxism (which he abhors) as the doctrine that all property must be socially owned while himself holding the sensible conviction that there is a great difference between property as social power and property which provides an individual the opportunity for the proper performance of his social function (house, farm, consumers' goods); and by concluding that a continental nation would not be dependent upon foreign trade at all if it were wise enough to provide adequate domestic markets. If it is not wise enough to do this, Mr. Frank continues, unreciprocal trade (trying to sell more than we buy) will not help it in the end. It will merely subsidize foreign rather than domestic paupers. When that game is played out it faces either fascism or socialism. But it is to be hoped that it will be wise enough even in that eventuality to distinguish between "key industries" and others and not try to socialize all property. Well, that wisdom (and to Mr. Frank's credit it must be said that he is probably wise in making that distinction) is available to hard-pressed European, as well as American, democratic nations.

Mr. Frank's primary difficulty obviously lies in his conception of the relation of foreign trade to capitalism —beg pardon, the profit system. He rightly maintains that a dearth of home markets cannot be permanently supplemented by subsidized foreign markets. We must either cancel the debts and give the goods away, or our debtors cannot buy further goods, since they must pay interest on previous loans with cheap goods which flood our markets. But this fact holds true of continental and non-continental nations with equal force. On the other hand great and small nations must engage in reciprocal trade if they are not to reduce living standards by the practice of manufacturing expensive substitutes for goods which could be cheaply imported. The small nations are more subject to the vicissitudes of world conditions in their involvement in reciprocal trade. But if it were genuinely reciprocal it would not make for war with them any more than with us.

No one can question our political advantages in continental isolation and our economic advantages in continental integration. Our living standards are manifestly higher than those of Europe. But obviously, as Mr. Frank confesses, they have not prevented depressions in our economy. If we produced ten times as much goods per capita as Europe and our millionaires were ten times richer than European plutocrats and our workers had a wage ten times higher than European proletarians, our economy would still be subject to violent dislocations if our markets could not absorb our productive capacity because of the faulty distribution of our wealth. Our isolation and our added wealth will both tend to retard the social processes of European decay; as indeed they have. On the other hand our social stupidity, in spite of Mr. Frank's belief that he has discerned budding social wisdom among some of the younger capitalists, is probably greater than the stupidity of, say, the English oligarchy in which traditions of an old aristocracy modify the natural political stupidity of pure plutocrats. Mere business rulers are singularly bereft of any real sense of security in their power. They are easily scared. And scared men are cruel and dangerous. We may, therefore, have a more difficult time in the end than Europe.

Be that as it may, we hope the Roosevelt Administration is a little clearer on the typical and unique problems which face America than Mr. Frank is. The typical problems outweigh the unique ones. The basic typical problem of contemporary industrialism is: given the disproportion of economic power in modern capitalism, can this disproportion be prevented from resulting in such flagrant inequalities of privilege as to wreck the productive process itself? Can this be done by using political power (still more equal than economic power) to equalize economic power or to equalize economic privilege (through taxation upon the rich and social services to the poor) or must the basic disproportion of economic power be destroyed before modern society can achieve health?

Nothing in Mr. Frank's ambitious book has cast new light upon that problem. It faces us just as urgently as it does any European nation.

"Tarry, Delight"

BY BEN BELITT

In jackal country, in the gum and umber,
That bird broke blank to the eyebeam.
She sprang
The feathery braid, the maze of slumber,
She trod the timeless humors, and the brief;
Her wings leapt thorny out of upper rain,
And chalked to stillness in that sparkling plane,
On derelict claws she sang.

What heart's-ease, and what thinking angers?

Her wings drove, black on bright;
For pure delight
The cold throat like a lessening spindle shook.
She sang the enemy joy as it were grief,
And, with a condor look,
A summer's space in blue,
Bore down the wreath like rue.

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CIGARETTES!

If you are just an average cigarette smoker you are probably wedded to one brand and may remain wedded to it after you've read our report on CIGARETTES in the July issue of CONSUMERS UNION REPORTS.

In spite of that, however, we think you'll find this report one of the most illuminating and interesting Consumers Union has ever published. In preparation for eight months, this report:

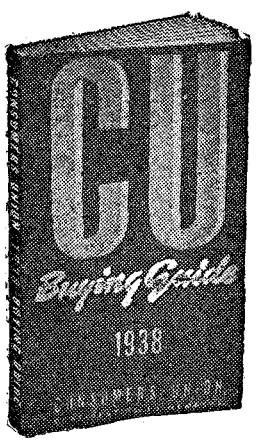
1. Rates more than 40 brands, by name (including Camel, Chesterfield, Old Gold, and Lucky Strike), for nicotine content and strength;
2. Tells you the physiological effects of smoking;
3. Presents data from carefully controlled smoking tests and laboratory tests;
4. Gives facts about de-nicotinized cigarettes and about the new filter-holders advertised as de-nicotinizers;
5. Discusses methods of stopping smoking and gives six rules for "seeming to smoke" which will reduce the injurious effects of smoking to a minimum.

Besides this report, the July issue also contains the results of laboratory and use tests on **GASOLINE, SUNBURN PREVENTIVES,** and several other products—with ratings *by brand name* as "Best Buys," "Also Acceptable," and "Not Acceptable." The report on GASOLINE shows how it is possible to make annual savings of from $15 to $50 on gasoline expenditures.

REFRIGERATORS

Are you planning to buy a refrigerator? If so, you will find the results of tests on 1938 refrigerators, published in the June issue of CONSUMERS UNION REPORTS, indispensable in making your selection. They point the way to savings of from $20 to $40 on the purchase price alone and show which brands offer the most substantial annual savings on operating costs. Twenty models are rated in this report in the estimated order of their merit.

Another report in this same issue rates 17 brands of **DOG FOOD** as "Best Buys," "Also Acceptable," and "Not Acceptable," and discusses the proper feeding of dogs. If you have been led to regard canned dog foods as adequate feeding in themselves, you owe it to your dog to read this report. Still other reports in this issue cover MEN'S HANDKERCHIEFS, CANNED STRING BEANS, CANNED FRUIT SALAD, CLEANSING TISSUES, FRESH FRUITS & VEGETABLES, and other products.



We'll be glad to send you these two money-saving issues if you'll cut out and mail the coupon at the right. We'll also send you the 288-page, confidential BUYING GUIDE pictured at the left. This GUIDE contains buying recommendations based on actual tests on over 2000 brands of products. Properly utilized, these recommendations can save the average family from $50 to $300 or more a year.

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BOOKS

With the Eighth Route Army

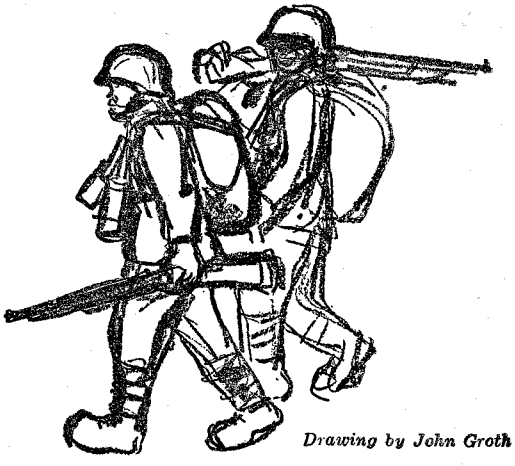
CHINA FIGHTS BACK. By Agnes Smedley. Vanguard Press. $2.50.

WHAT part have the Chinese Communist forces—now known as the Eighth Route Army and operating as a unit of China's national armies—played in the struggle to repel the Japanese invasion? Legitimate curiosity on this point aroused by "Red Star Over China," which supplied the prologue to the Red Army's role in the current war, has been fobbed off with mere scraps of information. Agnes Smedley fills the gap with a picturesque and detailed account of the early campaigns of the Eighth Route Army in North China. It is war reporting of the classic type, set down after long marches with fighting units behind enemy lines. Even seasoned war correspondents might have quailed before the hardships and dangers of the guerrilla campaigning which Agnes Smedley shared with the Eighth Army. Through her eyes we see Japanese planes sweeping over the Shansi-Hopei countryside, and crouch against hillsides or in loess caves. They sought—mostly in vain—for the ubiquitous Red contingents which stung their invading armies to desperation and robbed their conquest of reality. For how could a people be conquered when it was being organized and equipped to contest every Japanese force that ventured off the railway lines?

This work of organization, accomplished seemingly without effort by the Eighth Army's leaders, is the vital element in the miracle of increasing military resistance in North China. A few hundred partisan troops grow to thousands and then to tens of thousands in these pages; we know that now hundreds of thousands are at the front or guarding their villages in the North China provinces. With calm authority, the organizers of this mass movement establish the allegiance and effective cooperation of villages and county seats over a steadily enlarging territory. Agnes Smedley watched Chu Teh, the Eighth Army's commander, quietly addressing mass meetings of these villagers who had previously known him only by his legendary reputation. She describes the measures adopted to aid the villagers: the rigid discipline of the Eighth Army's soldiery; the payment carefully rendered for all food and services; the attention devoted to hygiene and sanitation, and to education, on pitifully meager resources; and the beginnings of a social reform program marked by lowered rents and interest rates. The picture is drawn from the vantage point of staff headquarters, which she accompanied part of the time, and also from her direct experiences with the Eighth Army's lower officers and rank and file. We see an instinctive sympathy growing up between this army and the people, out of which develops an administration that welds a whole population into an organized self-defense enterprise. Within a few months it is a people, not merely an army, which is offering coordinated and increasingly effective resistance to the Japanese invader. Wheat instead of cotton is planted in territory that Japan thought to conquer; an intelligence service rooted among the people gives advance notice of every Japanese military movement; food and recruits are mobilized on a wholesale scale by voluntary cooperation. Such a defense is invincible.

The newly formed partisan units are quickly drawn into attacks on isolated Japanese detachments, swift descents on supply convoys, or destruction of railway lines. On the whole, however, the partisans constitute an enormous military reserve for the Eighth Army, which itself carries the brunt of the heavy fighting. The first great military success of the Eighth Army occurred in late September at Pinghsiangkuan, one of the Great Wall passes in northern Shansi. Besides destroying a Japanese division, this victory delayed the fall of the Shansi capital and diverted large Japanese forces from an advance into Honan, where they might well have captured the strategic railway junction of Chengchow last November. In these engagements the Eighth Army's mobile tactics successfully overcame the mechanical superiority of the Japanese divisions. Japanese casualties, as Agnes Smedley points out, were many times those of the Eighth Army, and the losses of military supplies and equipment were even greater.

These are some of the more important items of Agnes Smedley's report from the battle lines in North China. Other details can only be suggested. Excerpts from the diaries of Japanese soldiers and officers supply convincing evidence of the distaste of Japan's conscript armies for their mission of conquest. Even more eloquent testimony to this fact is afforded by the voluntary adherence of some of the captured Japanese soldiers, after they were accorded good treatment by the Eighth Army, to the Chinese cause. The narrative acquires poetic intensity from superb descriptions of rapid night marches, of natural scenery and autumn landscapes, of sudden attacks delivered before daybreak, and of eerie treks along mountain trails in the moonlight. Intimate glimpses of the life of the Chinese peasantry, hospitable in the midst of desperate poverty and the added devastation of war, round out this tale of a people carrying on a struggle for individual and national survival in the face of disasters which would overwhelm a less hardy race. Agnes Smedley writes with a disdain for the outward flourishes of literary ornament, yet this book constitutes one of those inimitable pages of life experience which lays bare the reality of contemporary historical developments.



Drawing by John Groth

T. A. BISSON

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Horse Sense on Economics

LAMENT FOR ECONOMICS. By Barbara Wootton. Farrar & Rinehart. $2.

THE intelligent layman, confronted by a work on economic theory, is apt to feel first bewilderment, then revulsion. The subject matter concerns him deeply; it is fundamentally the question of our daily bread, its production and distribution. Nothing in essence could be less abstract; yet, when translated into theory by the trained economist, there results a monstrous web of hypotheses with little apparent relation to everyday experience. The near-monopoly which hitherto men have maintained in economic theory, as in metaphysics, supports the popular belief that women are more endowed with horse sense, and "Lament for Economics" is a further strong proof. Mrs. Wootton, a British economist in high standing, has dared to apply common sense to the mysteries of her profession with results that are sheer joy to the layman, though some of her colleagues, when they have recovered their breath, may feel inclined to subscribe to the Nazi view of woman's place in society.

Mrs. Wootton begins with the indictment which might be drawn up by the man in the street.

> The economic theory of today, it is alleged, is useless because it is unintelligible; because, after all their arduous studies, the economists cannot be relied upon not to give diametrically opposite diagnoses and prognoses of the same situation; because the economists feed on their own tails by busying themselves on the analysis of imaginary worlds which they themselves have invented; and finally because they are passing off as the result of purely scientific inquiry what is in reality no more than a partisan advocacy of particular social policies.

Adopting the definition of Professor Robbins, Britain's leading contemporary apostle of laissez faire, of the scope of economics as the study of "the forms assumed by human behavior in disposing of scarce means" between alternative uses, the author shows that economic theory is basically concerned with the action of markets in achieving this end. The assumption is that the objective and delicate market mechanism so exactly responds to human desires, expressed by supply and demand, as to produce an optimum disposal of scarce means. That is the perfect market of the economist's dream and "other things being equal" its theory should permit an exact analysis of the consequences of any change in supply and demand. But, as Mrs. Wootton demonstrates with clarity and wit, "again and again the refusal of *cetera* to remain *para* deflects the course of events from any recognizable relation to that charted by the clean logic of pure theory."

The useful application of market theory to the analysis of actual situations is, she shows, further hindered by such difficulties as the complexity of most economic problems, necessitating the employment of an almost infinite chain of hypotheses; the impossibility of isolating any economic problem without gross sacrifice of realism; the kinetic quality of the economic world which involves the emergence of new factors at a rate more rapid than that of adjustment to previous changes; the intractability of economic situations to generalization, since, for example, no one case of inflation is exactly like another; and the quantitative nature of most practical

LANGDON W. POST

assails the enemies of low-rent housing in

The Challenge of Housing

HERE'S the complete inside story on housing. The author was formerly Chairman of the New York City Housing Authority. Basing his statements on facts obtained from close contact with the housing problem over a period of years, he attacks the administration of housing by Secretary of the Interior Ickes, Alfred Rheinstein, and others. His challenging plan to make housing a public utility is the basis for a new approach to the subject. "Here is a philosophy of better homes, clearly and warm-heartedly stated, and here is an excellent summary of facts and choices. He writes with enthusiasm, indignation and the competence arising from his first-hand experience."—*N.Y. Times Book Review.* 309 pages, $3.50

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THE LAST FIVE HOURS OF AUSTRIA

"Supremely dramatic" —*The New Yorker*

By Eugene Lennhoff

Former Editor of the Vienna *Telegraph*

"AS AN able reporter he gives as profound a picture as a quick and trained glance at reality can catch. His intimate knowledge of locale and personnel allows him access to the news when it breaks and often before. He is in the chancellery in the hour of Hitler's ultimatum. He speaks with Mussolini's agent in Vienna—whose chief cannot be reached by the despairing chancellor; he is with Austria's chief of propaganda at the moment when Schuschnigg's broken voice orders him to broadcast the postponement of the plebiscite. A very exciting, very human, and very tragic document."—*The Nation.*

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economic problems which makes qualitative analysis at best a very crude tool. In addition the objectivity of the market has always to some extent been undermined by monopoly on the one hand and government interference on the other, and there is a strong trend toward the aggrandizement of both these influences.

Following her closely argued demonstration of the practical sterility of contemporary economic theory, Mrs. Wootton suggests two possible readings of the situation: either the economists have not yet perfected their tools and we must wait patiently while they do; or they have been expending energy and ingenuity in fashioning tools which are both inadequate and inappropriate. Most readers, I fancy, will agree with the author that the second alternative is the more plausible.

It is not possible in the space of a review to draw attention to all the plums in this admirable book. One can only recommend with a chuckle the account of the Nature and Insignificance of Economic Science, and the devastating logic of the chapter on Economics as Apologetics. Finally it must be made clear that Mrs. Wootton is not solely concerned with destructive criticism. She has very definite ideas about the direction in which economists must turn if their *expertise* is to be something more than a difficult intellectual pastime and, in her last chapter, she outlines an agenda which frankly repudiates the view that economics is concerned only with means, and not with social ends.

KEITH HUTCHISON

John L.

SIT DOWN WITH JOHN L. LEWIS. By C. L. Sulzberger. Random House. $1.50.

THERE are many gaps in both friends' and foes' pictures of John L. Lewis, the second most important figure in contemporary American life. Newspapers and magazines have told much of his current activities, a little of his character and background. Cecil Carnes's book of two years ago, a reshuffling of newspaper clippings, contributed scant light and much misinformation. Now comes a small volume by C. L. Sulzberger, who has covered Lewis and labor for the United Press in Washington, which goes a long way toward filling the void. Sulzberger has gathered many anecdotes whose accuracy is vouched for by members of the Lewis family. For the first time there emerges a human picture of the man who today enjoys the loyalty of 4,000,000 breadwinners and the distinction of being hated by a choice collection of industrial despots and political charlatans.

Despite a style made annoying by repetition and staccato journalese, Sulzberger paints a rounded portrait of Lewis that contains many hitherto unavailable details. We see Lewis as a boy going to work in the mines even before the family budget required his contribution. We see him as a young giant in physical strength, ready to fight at a dare, but with a wistful longing for accomplishments of a more pacific nature. For a period in his early twenties, a restlessness took him from a small Iowa coal town for "a workingman's tour of the West via stagecoach, cushion, and rod." He labored in coal, copper, and silver mines. Once he spent days helping "dig four human carcases out of a collapsed mine." He shared the dangers and poverty of migratory labor, and on him then was impressed the fortitude of the miner and his great feeling for the disinherited. Returning to a more stable life, he passed up business opportunities for a career of leadership in the miners' union. To hold his own and work his way to the top, he talked and fought in miner fashion. He began then to pore over the classics and a range of literature far removed from the mine pits and indicative of his longing for a broader horizon.

Rough-and-tumble politics in the miners' union and out of it made Lewis agile of mind. He was Gompers's favorite organizer, but far too talented, aggressive, and independent to fall into the rut of a labor skate. Sulzberger reveals the humor of the man, a side of him that is obliterated in the blood-and-thunder cartoons and word-pictures drawn by his enemies. He quotes Lewis's description of a huge and stormy open-air meeting where an evenly divided union considered a strike: "When I called for a vote the 'ayes' shook the houses. But the 'noes' leveled the mountains. And all around me were bricks. I have never seen so many useless bricks piled up in great big heaps." Sulzberger reveals also the affection and solidarity of Lewis's family life, and his reserve which keeps his personal affairs at home. His desire for comfort and his lack of interest in great wealth and personal political advancement also come clear in the telling of the story.

Sulzberger's comments on other C. I. O. leaders are largely snap judgments, and he is far better at reporting than analysis. His labor history shows but a perfunctory attempt to understand the movement and its development, and there are errors on that score. However, for those who want to understand Lewis and the mainsprings of his behavior "Sit Down with John L. Lewis" will prove of great value.

EDWARD LEVINSON

"Private Chaos"

THE FAMILY: PAST AND PRESENT. By Bernhard J. Stern. D. Appleton-Century Company. $2.75.

WE ARE accustomed to speak of the family as our "basic" and "most sacred" institution. Actually family life in our culture tends to be lived unobtrusively under the feet of our economic system. The culture exercises a ragged control, varying from state to state, over family formation and divorce. Between these two polar points it leaves everything to love and laissez faire. Neither of these being notably intelligent in ordering complicated institutional sequences, and the former having a disappointing tendency to "settle down" after marriage, the family has been characterized as "an arena of private chaos." If that phrase seems too strong in view of the prevailing tendency to believe that "American families are happy," it at least will serve to suggest the complexity of this experience which our culture expects each of us to take in his untutored stride.

The present volume is a skilful assemblage of basic source materials on the family as an institution and as a focus of personal problems. It was prepared by Dr. Stern as a textbook under the sponsorship of the Commission on Human Relations of the Progressive Education Association. It is not "written down" but presents original materials ranging from

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anthropology, history, pronouncements by the various churches, psychiatry, fiction, and social research, carried along in an effective skeleton of text by Dr. Stern. The result comes as near to being a straightaway book that an adult can pick up and read through as a source-book is ever likely to be. The family is presented as a dynamic process in a wide institutional setting, including a section of five selections from studies of the family in the current depression. The realistic treatment of the impact of economic factors on family living is a notable feature of the entire book.

For the person who has never thought much about "the family," beyond the private idiom of today's decisions and tomorrow's plans in "my family," this book should be a stimulating experience.

ROBERT S. LYND

"Lend a Myth to God"

A VISION. By W. B. Yeats. The Macmillan Company. $3.
THE HERNE'S EGG, AND OTHER PLAYS. By W. B. Yeats. The Macmillan Company. $2.

POETS need a synthesis of values. And Yeats, who had no traditional religion to give him this, found it, in his youth, in Irish tradition and myth. In his middle years, through the help of his wife as medium, he began to work out a scheme by which reality could be fused with vision. The result is "A Vision" (now for the first time in an American edition), a book which will be more interesting on the whole to spiritualists and astrologists than to historians or philosophers. Yeats's imagination fed on ritual and myth; he needed some scheme which made the supernatural seem natural and the natural seem supernatural. Man's consciousness, according to his spiritualistic directors, could be pictured as moving between the sun, or the purely objective, and the moon, or the purely subjective. History too moved between these two poles. And curiously enough, Yeats, independently of other historians, determined with the aid of his spiritual advisers certain dates which historians accept. Asked how seriously one may take all this discussion of states of discord and concord between dark and light, Yeats replies that it is all really a "stylistic arrangement of experience comparable to the cubes in the drawing of Wyndham Lewis and to the ovoids in the sculpture of Brancusi." He adds that these arrangements "have helped me to hold *in a single thought* reality and justice."

The reader may, I think, take his cue from this quotation. The whole of this very strange book is a poet's scheme for seizing upon symbols whereby reality and vision may, in the imagination, fuse. Through this scheme Yeats renewed his imaginative vitality and was enabled to face a chaotic world as if it were not chaotic. He had ceased to believe in his Irish fairyland. He required an arrangement of values which would allow his mind to roam into the past or the future, to bring the future, or the purely visionary, to illuminate the present. The Michael Robartes poems are clearly related to the group of dream stories told in this book, and most of Yeats's later poetic symbolism of sun and moon is drawn from the scheme which he here sets down, with, for most of us, a few too many passes through the air, too many psychic

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phenomena. The poems are perfectly clear; the prose account of how the poet conceived the poems or their symbols is not so clear.

The introduction to "A Vision" is a charming bit of lyric prose. "The Packet for Ezra Pound" gives us the most complete account, received directly from Pound, of what he is doing with his Cantos. We plunge then into the "gyres" and "converging triangles," black and white, which illustrate for Yeats the various phases of concord and discord. Few readers will wade through all this to come upon the occasional brilliant comments concerning this or that poet whom Yeats places in their respective spheres closer or farther from the moon, or the subjective mind.

In "The Herne's Egg, and Other Plays" (two others, to be exact) Yeats makes use of some of the symbols—particularly those of sun and moon—which he explains in his "Vision." These plays are far removed from the pretty fantasies of Yeats's earlier dramatic writing. The poet has left reality entirely and writes of myth, but of myth which has an amazing way of throwing tangential light upon our ordinary world. The meaning of the plays lies in myth and suggestion and is to be caught at but not to be paraphrased. "The Herne's Egg" is based on an old myth of a thunder bird, the Herne, which is all spirit. Two old warriors offend this god and meet their death, but not before, in much beautiful poetry, we have caught suggestions of the follies of mankind. The two other plays resemble the Salome story. Both deal with women who must be cruel in order to love. Both are an acknowledgment of the power of death and love to impregnate. "The King of the Great Clock Tower" has appeared before in a prose version. It is more beautiful in poetry. The others are new. Symbolic and ritualistic in style, all three cut through man's deception of himself.

EDA LOU WALTON

Shorter Notices

MAY FLAVIN. By Myron Brinig. Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50.

Take one Irish family *à la* "In Old Chicago," drop them into boiling New York and stir them (not too vigorously) with an Edna Ferber spoon, take out the solid residue and roll it in Hollywood, and you have Myron Brinig's Opus 8. "The Sisters," his last year's novel, carried conviction, whether he actually knew the three young ladies or not, but somehow "May Flavin" all seems to have happened in fiction before. Irresponsible, ne'er-do-well boy meets strong-willed, single-minded girl; they marry, struggle against poverty, and beget six children; father disappears, and mother raises her brood of ducklings; the offspring develop into six very different types, ranging from very, very bad to very, very good; two of them win great financial success and reward their mother with luxuries she doesn't enjoy; mother has happy reunion with repentant father shortly before his death; and life goes on. This is not to say that the book is absolutely unoriginal, or that reading it is necessarily a waste of time. But the rambling plot has a way of falling into the expected pattern and the characters are drawn from a much-used stock of types. Furthermore, Mr. Brinig likes to add comments and gratuitous touches here and there to double-clinch some point that any moderately intelligent reader should be able to grasp with no extra assistance. It's not flattering, and it's apt to make you feel like a solitaire player with a kibitzer looking over your shoulder and pointing out plays that you've already noticed.

SAID BEFORE SUNSET. By Frederick Mortimer Clapp. Harper and Brothers. $2.

This new volume of poems by Mr. Clapp is the most interesting he has yet written. His poetry is not static as is so much verse of the imagist school. He draws the objective image through its subjective reflection, or he throws the subjective image out as a kind of flashlight fixed momentarily upon an objective reality. His use of the imagist technique is unique. He never uses word-painting for its own sake, but presents vivid pictures of impressions as definitions of the most subtle and shifting spiritual reactions to life. It is as if each of his images were both the picture of something in actual existence and an abstraction of what, emotionally, or intellectually, this impression of reality meant. The chief emotion of these poems is fear—fear for personal integrity and values in a world which denies them. And although Mr. Clapp advises poets to stay apart from the struggle, to "saturate with vision and the grief which keeps all vision clean," he is himself compelled to consider the condition of the world. He realizes that poetic vision depends upon the poet's awareness of a real world, and that grief, today especially, must result from the knowledge of an irreconcilable reality and vision. Being most concerned with the conflict between matter and spirit, Mr. Clapp sees this conflict solved only at moments of spiritual intensity, or by death.

RECORDS

IN the third movement of Franck's Sonata for violin and piano there is a passage which Franck—for reasons that have to do with the emotional significance of the music—has marked *molto dolce e tranquillo.* In the new recording made by Heifetz and Rubinstein (Victor: three records, $6.50) this passage begins at a point about 1 11/16 inches inward from the first groove of record four; and anything less tranquil than what Heifetz makes of it would be difficult to imagine: not a measure in which he does not hold back, then hurry, or hurry, then hold back; not three notes without a swell; an exaggerated retardation for the culminating B-flat (2 inches inward); on this note and the next a pause vastly out of proportion in the prevailing pace, then an equally discontinuous acceleration. What the passage—and not just this passage—should sound like you can hear in the excellent performance of Dubois and Maas (Columbia). When Heifetz was young he made music sound as though he were playing with cool detachment; now his every phrase bulges with the manifestations of personal warmth; and hearing Heifetz warm I prefer Heifetz cool.

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Normally—as in the slow movement of the recent Mozart Divertimento—Szigeti's playing is the antithesis of Heifetz's in the subtle inflection and continuity of its sustained phrasing. But in the performance of Brahms's D minor Sonata that he has recorded with Egon Petri (Columbia: three records, $5) he does a great deal of fussing with tempo and shading that breaks up what should be the continuous line of the music. In other respects the playing of both artists is excellent. A fine Columbia single ($1.50) offers Milstein's performances of Pergolesi's Sonata No. 12 and a Nardini Larghetto in A; Telemann's Fantasias for harpsichord (three records, $5) have their duller and their brighter moments, and are superbly played by Ernst Victor Wolff; Beethoven's Triple Concerto, no matter how well it is played, you do best to ignore.

There are affecting pages in Schumann's Symphony No. 2—those with Schumann's characteristic warmth, softness, and intimacy of feeling, as distinguished from those that represent only the necessities of symphonic development and structure; but what is characteristic in Ormandy's performance with the Philadelphia Orchestra (five records, $10) is the tense, hard brilliance. There are suppleness and opulence, however, in his performance of Harl McDonald's two Hebraic Poems (one record, $2). I find this work attractive in substance and scoring; but it may well be that if I knew the original ancient Hebraic themes out of which it is allegedly wrought I would find the modern treatment of them incongruous. McDonald conducts the orchestra and vocal forces in a performance of a fine Magnificat by C. P. E. Bach that is faultily recorded (two records, $4.50). On a Victor single ($2) Menuhin does a good job with the Dvorak-Kreisler Slavonic Dance No. 2 and the Brahms-Joachim Hungarian Dance No. 4; on another single ($1.50) Melchior does well with some inconsequential songs by Hildach, Trunk, Sjoberg, and Grieg; on another ($2) George Copeland wastes marvelously subtle coloring on Debussy's "Veils" and plays his "La Puerta del Vino" much too slowly; another ($2) offers the voice and tremolo of Enid Szantho in "Erbarme Dich" from the St. Matthew Passion; another ($2) the art of Chaliapin, in a state of considerable deterioration, in Moussorgsky's "Song of the Flea" and the Volga boatmen's song. That leaves Arthur Fiedler's performances of Strauss waltzes with the Boston "Pops" Orchestra (five records, $7), which suggest the goose-stepping Vienna of today rather than the waltzing Vienna of yesterday.

Having been able to recommend so little thus far I am relieved to find something I can get enthusiastic about. This is a Decca set (five records, $5) of Beethoven's Sonatas, Opus 12 No. 1 and Opus 30 No. 1, for piano and violin—works with charm and humor that are heightened by the superlative ensemble performances of Lili Krauss and Simon Goldberg.

The experts I have talked with advise against use of a sapphire needle as a substitute for steel in the ordinary magnetic or crystal pickup. The Telefunken, which uses a sapphire point, is not an ordinary pickup, in that it is designed to provide the conditions for use of this point, which is built in as an integral part of it. Nor is the Telefunken ordinary in what it picks up from the record; but it is German.

B. H. HAGGIN

"...Shreds!"

SIX months ago *The Nation* printed in its correspondence columns a letter from Christine H. Sturgeon of "Cairngorm, Currie, Midlothian, Scotland," in which she said that she had passed on her copies of *The Nation* in her small Scottish town "until they were in shreds."

"Thereupon," a New York reader informs us, "I mailed her a few copies of *The Nation* without any letter, merely putting my name on the package. In response I received the following thrilling letter:

Thank you ever so much for the extra copies of *The Nation*. It's just that sort of friendly cooperation between good plain citizens in different countries that is going to steady this insane old world of ours.

I am more and more convinced that the people everywhere are sound and decent. I've met them, and been friends with them, in France and Spain and England and our own United States (which was my home for a good many years)—and here in Scotland they're among the nicest. It seems to me that what we have to do is to throw our small but definite weight all the time into the effort to help all of us understand each other better. That's why papers like *The Nation* are doing such a valuable job. Their interpretation of world events is so clear and intelligent, and they have a grand international slant.

Your copies of *The Nation* went at once down to the branch of the Cooperative which we joined as soon as we settled here. And we were assured that the magazines would be read and passed on and passed on again *ad infinitum*. So, you see, you are being mightily appreciated.

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Letters to the Editors

Town Meeting Please Note

Dear Sirs: In the familiar words of H. G. Wells, a race is in progress between education and catastrophe. The plutocratic press, the pornographic press, and the timid and colorless press are not contributing much to the education of the masses. The progressive weeklies and monthlies are doing their part, but their circulations are not large, and they are not read by many of our lawmakers and public officials. Catastrophe's chance of winning the awful race is dishearteningly good.

Hence lovers of justice, liberty, and progress heartily welcome the New York Town Meeting of the Air as a new educational agency. Just now, however, it needs candid advice rather than gratitude, for it can enhance its power for good by certain changes in procedure.

In the first place, there are many difficult and vital questions which cannot be adequately discussed at one town meeting and for which three or four meetings should be set aside. Examples are: The Way Out of the Present Recession; Isolation versus Collective Security; the Future of the Railroads. Last winter and spring these and other subjects were very superficially handled by speakers who, if allowed more time and subjected to more effective prodding, might have thrown much more light upon them and thus really contributed to public education.

In the second place, in the Town Meeting of the Air issues are seldom, if ever, actually joined. Not that all educational discussion must necessarily take the form of formal "joint debates." But each speaker should be provided in advance with a copy of the remarks to be made by his opponent, and he should be requested to give his interpretation of facts or principles concerning which there is no agreement. To illustrate: the discussion of the conflict between the A. F. of L. and the C. I. O. left auditors bewildered and dissatisfied. Charges of the gravest character were leveled at the leaders of the C. I. O. by the spokesman of the rival federation, and not one of these charges was disposed of by the C. I. O. champion. Such incoherent and unplanned discussion may be better than nothing, but it is not truly educational.

In the third place, too much time is wasted on irrelevant or foolish questions. The moderator should decline to put questions not calculated to clear up obscure points or meet reasonable objections to positions taken by the speakers.

VICTOR S. YARROS

Chicago, June 15

How About It, Mr. Sullivan?

Dear Sirs: This is an expression of pleasure in meeting Frank Sullivan in the columns of *The Nation*. I hope he becomes a "regular." As a follower of his since his earliest days on the *World*, I have had great difficulty trying to locate him.

Please give him a job.

F. H. RAMSEY

Pittsburgh, Pa., July 1

Mexico Is in Good Shape

Dear Sirs: Unfavorable reports about Mexico have seriously reduced tourist travel over the Pan-American Highway, judging by a trip I made on June 14 from Laredo, Texas, to Mexico City. Few tourists were seen along the road. The manager of the Ancira Hotel, largest in Monterrey, has applied to the government for permission to close his dining room, owing to lack of tourist trade. The number of tourists from Houston, Texas, that visited Mexico City during June of last year was 600, while so far this June the number has not reached 50.

Tourists have been told that the highway is difficult to travel. Within five miles of the border I was told that the motor oil in Mexico was of poor quality, that the gasoline was of poor grade, and that prices were high. Moreover, the "revolution" made the trip a hazard. Not any of this information proved to be true. The popular brands of gasoline and oil sold in the United States are sold in Mexico at about the same price. The people along the way were friendly, courteous, and obliging. Crossing through the eastern part of the state of San Luis Potosi, where the revolution was reported active, we saw only two soldiers and what appeared to be a large army tent with several cots under it. Soldiers were seen at various other points along the highway, as they always are in Mexico, for soldiers here perform a sort of police duty. The people with whom we talked seemed to be strongly in favor of Cárdenas.

Despite the unfavorable reports, economic conditions in Mexico seem to be improving. The houses in the country districts, though mere huts, appear to be in better condition than when I saw them five years ago. There are more crops growing and fewer beggars on the streets. The government has a minimum-wage scale of from two to three and a half pesos a day. Before the minimum-wage law, the wages were as low as 75 centavos a day.

People thinking about coming to Mexico need have no fears about unstable conditions. The only difficulties I experienced were that the towns were far apart and there were about 100 miles of mountain driving that should not be attempted in a poor car. The road is paved and the grades are not steep, but they are long and most of the turns do not yet have guard rails, although these are now being built.

BRUCE J. MANLEY

Houston, Texas, June 18

The Longer View

Dear Sirs: While the lending-spending bill is justified as an emergency measure, I cannot but express objection to your enthusiastic support of it as a remedy for our economic ills. It seems to me to be an increasingly apparent fact, evidenced by the failure of the spending programs of the past six years to restore permanent vitality to our system, that such efforts are at best but a temporary stimulation, a sort of shot in the arm, and not a cure.

There is reflected, I think, a predominant weakness in your advocacy of the liberal point of view. You apparently affirm the essential soundness of our economic system. You apparently believe that the faltering of the machine is but the effect of some superficial flaw, easily remedied by a little tinkering, and not a defect in the plan of construction of the machine. This may be true, but if it is it needs some demonstrating, and if it is not, some vigorous efforts toward a diagnosis of the trouble are certainly called for.

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position in other respects, I wonder if its hesitancy on this score is not prompted by fear, the fear of the epithet "red."

The fact is that our economic machine shows a persistent inclination to bog down. Factories are idle. Store-fronts are vacant. Men are out of work, and human beings are insecure, frightened, and hungry. It is time that liberal men and particularly the journal of liberal opinion should openly attack the problem of what is wrong with the machine without regard to whatever elements of "isms" might be involved in the diagnosis.

KENNETH R. JOHNSON

Compton, Calif., June 14

War We Will Not Have!

Dear Sirs: President Roosevelt's able work as champion of a big navy and the courteous attention he is giving all measures that might place this nation under a dictator have done much to undermine our confidence in his ability and his sincerity. Either the munition manufacturers and the Hearst papers have thrown a war scare into him or his social heritage is so strong that he thinks this nation is responsible for the safety of its globe-trotting industrialists and their economic empires abroad.

For generations the American people have thought of the government at Washington as a three-ring circus, a performance too far away from everyday life to be important in the workaday world. But for six years, we have been learning that the federal government can come close to our lives. Now comes the question of the armament race and the war that will inevitably follow. If the rest of the nation is thinking and acting like this small town, war we will not have. If our leaders cannot see that progress and sanity for the whole world can best be preserved by keeping the peace ourselves, then it is time we had new leaders.

LETHA BENDER

Moscow, Idaho, June 25

Man and His Home

Dear Sirs: The Federal Home Loan Bank Board has proposed a uniform mortgage law for the forty-eight states which will cut the foreclosure period down to 120 days. I wonder how many people realize the significance of this. It is a profound subversion of all the principles of Anglo-Saxon equity and will wipe out the last vestige of protection for the borrower and homeowner. The real-estate boards have been working for this for years, and now they have it handed to them by the New Deal Administration.

A study of the history of equity as a branch of Anglo-Saxon law reveals that when it was established there was a humane and decent recognition that the foxes of the earth had their holes and the birds of the air their nests, and that man too should have a place to lay his head. In fact, so strong was this feeling (of "natural rights") that court decisions established the principle of "once a mortgage always a mortgage." We have come a long way from that concept.

FAY B. MCCONKEY

Philadelphia, Pa., June 6

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